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# **PRAJA SOCIALISM: MONOPOLY'S PAWN**

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## Introduction

MOST intelligent Indians outside the Socialist and KMP parties, and many within them, greeted the pompous announcement of the "merger" achieved in Bombay in September with expressions of contempt. Wags immediately pointed out that Acharya Kripalani had described it as a *sangam*, usually the venue for sanctification after physical death of all good Hindus. But even when called "merger" it sounded ridiculous because mergers are the tactics of tottering commercial firms. Perhaps it was not Sri Kripalani or Sri Jayaprakash who invented the unfortunate term, but the capitalist press, which should have been happy (but was not) that the "Second" and the "Third" parties had after all been united.

*The Hindu* of Madras wrote its editorial on the event under the title "Opportunist". *The Hindustan Times* of Delhi said it was "a marriage of convenience without a union of hearts." *The Times of India* of Bombay made roaring fun about the slick deal that had been put through. *The National Herald* of Lucknow wrote: "The merger has, indeed, introduced more confusion than clarification as far as thinking goes." *The Hindustan Standard* which usually has a soft corner for "respectable" socialism said rather intriguingly, "It can have no future if it be a party of Kripalanists and Jayaprakashites."

It should be said to the credit of the General Council of the Socialist Party, however, that it did not call the transaction a "merger" but a "fusion". This did not improve matters because, against the background of chaotic interpretation by the leaders that followed and preceded the sacred act, "fusion" seemed impossible.

Nor did the stunt "rally" to celebrate the "merger" on the Chowpatty sands on a holiday, when practically everyone in Bombay takes his family out, help. The desperate adventures in advertisement resorted to by Shri Asoka Mehta before and after the "merger" proved just

*Press Journal* of Bombay as one of "cautious optimism". Politics, he said, "involved the taking of calculated risks." It was a calculated risk, something every ambitious businessman must undertake when he goes into a "merger" with someone who operates an overdraft! The more practical Prakasam announced as soon as he reached Madras after "merging" that "he did not understand why people should think that because of the merger, the U.D.F. was weakened. On the other hand there was every possibility of strengthening the U. D. F. by bringing the Socialist group within the front." (In fact, the courageous policy adopted by Shri Adityan since the merger has proved that the U. D. F. cannot easily be upset without great political danger to Shri Prakasam.) Shri Prakasam naturally will not mind if his own cautious and hopeful attitude to the merger totally contradicts the understanding of his new partners. After all in a "merger" of this nature it is "to each according to his greed".

The National Executive of the Socialist Party when it adopted in February the "political line" sanctioning merger with parties "large and small sharing the same vision" (albeit a vision of vineyards) had said, without taking Shri Prakasam into account, that "such a rallying together has become all the more necessary because there is the danger in the Communist Party misleading the people that their salvation lay in the united fronts they are trying to form."

Together, what do Shri Prakasam's hope and the National Executive's fear mean?

The "merger" for Shri Prakasam is a means to add strength to the U.D.F. of which the Communist Party is a component part. The "merger" to the Socialist Party is a means to smash the Front. Who will succeed and who will fail? The vineyard of Asian hopes seems, indeed, a vineyard full of thorns for everyone in it.

The antics and the utterances of the leaders of the two parties after the hole-and-corner deal they struck in Bombay, against the wishes of all sections of progressive opinion within their parties, indeed make the "merger" ridiculous, and it is only natural that what is ridiculous should be treated with contempt by the public. But

ridiculous things can be dangerous. A clown can make a circus tragic by falling down and breaking his neck. He can become dangerous if he, in his folly, goes and opens the lion's cage.

This "merger", in itself inconsequential, has potentialities of danger and therefore deserves the attention of everyone interested in the economic and social progress of the people of India through the various phases of a vast revolution. Let us first see where its significance truly lies, and then, where danger lurks.

### *1. Mutual Contempt*

To understand its true significance it is necessary to have a true estimate of the political quantities that have merged. Such an estimate should neither suffer from the natural contempt that the progressive mind will feel for the absurdity of the stunts performed by the leaders of the two parties, nor from a tendency to over-estimate the two quantities in terms of the danger implied in their "merger".

In evaluating the two parties let us start by finding out what they think of each other.

In the old days it used to be accepted by every Socialist leader that the chief opponent of socialism in the Congress High Command was Shri J. B. Kripalani whose constant endeavour used to be to drive the Congress Socialist Party out of the Congress. As General Secretary of the Congress he had to provide the organisational basis for Gandhian political thinking generally; as a chief executive of the institutions designed to implement Gandhian economic formulations, he developed an attitude of impatient annoyance for the Congress Socialist Party. This he never bothered to hide. His annoyance was not based on any fear that the "Congress Socialist" leaders would ever capture the Congress. It was more the irritation of a man of settled convictions for a group of permanent vacillators. This estimate of the Socialist



Party's intellectual integrity had not undergone any perceptible change till practically the day of the "merger", for, we find him writing in his own paper in the week of the glorious *sangam* as follows:

"They [the Socialists] have not, I am afraid, yet freed themselves from the leading strings of Western thought, supposed to be the intellectual norm even today. The tallest amongst us yet suffer from a kind of complex which need not be named before the foreigners especially of the Western variety. We yet want their certificates to habilitate ourselves before our countrymen; *unless this habit disappears the Socialists cannot talk in terms of Indian Socialism.*"

About their antecedents Kripalani said:

"Gandhiji wanted one of the Socialist leaders to take up the high office [of the Congress Presidentship] as also enjoy the doubtful honour associated with it after independence. *He thought that the Socialists were nearer to the Prime Minister than any of his earlier companions who endorsed his policies and ideas!?"*

It was his own unbridgeable distance from the Prime Minister which caused Kripalani's resignation. Gandhiji's opinion that the Socialist leaders were very much nearer to the Prime Minister than anyone else seems, in the circumstances, an odd qualification for the present partnership.

As for Indian Socialist tactics, Shri Kripalani, writing with supreme sarcasm about the recent fast undertaken by Shri Jayaprakash said, "The fast ended in the midst of a gathering of friends and admirers with a congregational prayer. It all *looked* so very Gandhian!"

If the Socialists seem fit subjects for sneers and sarcasm to the KMPP chief, how does the KMPP itself appear in the eyes of the Socialists? Shri Jayaprakash Narayan, discussing the KMPP in a pamphlet called *Political Trends*, published just before the elections, wrote: "The KMPP will no doubt offer to the people an alternative at the general elections; but it will only be in the nature of an alternative personal leadership." The

KMPP, in other words, was an opportunist breakaway from the Congress capable merely of challenging Congress leadership on a plane of relative personal worth of leaders. Shri Asoka Mehta writing in August 1952 said in *The Political Mind of India*: "The KMPP has yet to bring together in a seamless garment its philosophy, policy and programme." The tattered political habiliments of Kisan-Mazdurism cruelly hurt the elegant aestheticism of the would-be Lasalle of India!

It is however in the younger and fresher mind of Shri Madhu Limaye (which he unburdened in a pamphlet entitled *Where is the Left Going?*) that we get a true picture of the Socialist estimate of the worth of the KMPP:

"These so-called *Sarvodayists* in their bitterness and frustration thought communism was an ally and not an enemy . . ." (p. 4)

"The willingness of the KMP leaders to negotiate with the Communists gave them great respectability without in any way heightening the people's regard for the integrity and character of the KMP leaders. . . . The CPI found in the KMP, which was a coalition of heterogeneous and miscellaneous elements, with only negative hatred of the Congress binding them together, useful material to work on. They exploited the vanities and weaknesses of the KMP adroitly . . ." (p. 5)

"Mr. Kripalani says (a) the Communists do not use violence of their own volition but are forced to do so (b) they never betray their allies (c) it is ridiculous to say they are the agents of Russia." (After producing facts from Indonesia and Burma to 'prove' that Shri Kripalani was entirely wrong, our writer said) "These are facts which not even the ingenious and perverse logic of Mr. Kripalani can explain away."

This mutual exchange of abuse by the two partner streams of the Sangam does give us some idea of the quantities that have now merged but only in terms of their incompatibility, not in terms of the collective harm they may do together.

*Let us now adopt the historical approach and try to view the two parties objectively.*

## *2. The K. M. P. P.*

The KMPP evolved through a series of personal disappointments. Shri Kripalani mentioned in Bombay the fact that the leaders of his party could have been Governors if they wanted to, and they should not, therefore, be suspected of "frustration". Shri Kripalani did not, however, say that KMPP leaders had been offered Ministerships. Governorships in our constitution are not attractive to "vital politicians". If the KMPP heroes had rejected ministerships they may have claimed that it was not "frustration" which brought them to their present pass. As it is, Shri Kripalani's argument carries no conviction.

Sardar Patel's intervention in the politics of the Bengal Congress suddenly raised the stock of Dr. B. C. Roy and sent Shri P. C. Ghosh into the wilderness of "constructive effort". The neutrality of Gandhiji at a crucial moment cost Shri Kripalani his strategic position in the Congress presidential chair. The refusal of the Kamaraja Nadar caucus to accommodate Shri Kelappan in preference to Shri Madhava Menon sent the former on a rebellious tour. The impossibility of an Andhra leader ever becoming the Prime Minister of Madras in a nationality-conscious epoch made the aged Prakasam take to vitriolic speech and perverse politics. The Pant-Kidwai contradiction in U. P. encouraged a number of hasty white-cap patriots to conclude that Kidwai Saheb would lead them to safety and security via the KMPP.

These were the cardinal factors that operated in the evolution of the KMPP.

Having come together in tribulation, these leaders sought for and found in the "administrative inefficiency", "betrayal of Gandhian doctrines", and in the love of pomp of their erstwhile but more successful colleagues, plausi-

ble grounds for loud verbal assaults. Jumbling them up they constructed an "ideology". The "pure" Gandhians, Shri Kumarappa, Shri Shankarrao Deo, Shri Vinobha Bhave and others kept away because they realised quite well that KMPP-ism would only lead to the most amoral interpretation of politics.

The KMPP had, at no time, a positive approach to any problem. The party never enunciated an economic analysis or programme. Its virtue lay entirely in its acrid hate of men, cleverer and more callous than themselves, who had captured the Congress Party machine and the administration. This lack of an economic *raison d'être*, this acute personal hatred of the men in power, this frantic urge to unite at any cost for the sake of Opposition, are inevitable in a purely opportunist party like the KMPP.

In all transitional epochs—that is, in times when one mode of production is tardily giving way to another, when, everywhere, old relationships of production are uncertain and anomalous—the increase in the size of parasite groups is a common phenomenon. In his studies in the development of capitalism, Maurice Dobb convincingly bears witness to this phenomenon. The Indian situation is undoubtedly one of transition. In various degrees in different parts of India, feudalism is giving way before newer forms of property in the means of production, creating in addition to groups of old social parasites, newer specimens. The general change in world conditions does not, however, permit the accommodation of parasite groups like the KMPP in our economy through "the natural growth of noble families, sub-infeudation, the multiplication of retainers, etc.," which were the ancient solutions. Instead, various sinecure-seeking middle-class groups are thrown up and cry for absorption in the administrative structure, in the bourgeois political system of "parties", in redundant managerial situations etc. In proportion to the incapacity of the social system to accommodate them as parasites, political confusion grows.

The factional struggle for power among such groups is a fierce phenomenon in all transitional epochs. The

*exhaustion of the old and the comparative immaturity of the new working classes, places class struggle in such epochs beyond the scope of quick revolutionary organisation.* In proportion to the diffusion of real class antagonisms, the rivalries of the parasite groups for achieving control of the administration and earning a share of the profits from production become important political phenomena. To attempt to determine the exact class interests that these groups represent is futile because in such epochs sub-class definitions appear more than usually vague. The quarrels and rivalries of these groups, however, are glaringly personal. Groups gather round one leader or another lusting for opportunities and occasions for gaining power, as they did during the Wars of the Roses in Britain. The methods of struggle between these groups depend on the given historic situation. In ancient days, during such transitions, differences between such groups would have been settled through street battles. In our own situation, the struggle inevitably becomes "political" and parliamentary. The gathering of the KMPP, if we try to give it a scientific explanation, is the assembly of such groups capable, fundamentally, of representing only the interests and understanding of one parasite group growing politically clamant due to the peculiar conditions of our transition. Its quarrel with the Congress can at no time be anything more than socially adventitious and economically futile.

To overthrow the Congress a militant consolidation of the classes smarting under the oppression of the chief owners of the means of production and their satellites is necessary. Only the summoning together of all elements of the democratic people can establish such a consolidation. The KMPP can never dare to espouse such a cause because, essentially, the economic understanding of its conservative leaders will not permit them to trust the broad masses. The objective of the KMPP leaders has always been snatching of control over the bureaucracy that Britain gave the present ruling clique when her own supervision was withdrawn. Beyond this objective, the KMPP's vision was always blinkered. But, compelled to accept the fact that even a purely power-hungry gang

should have an economic formula to place before the masses, it has hastily snatched at the word "decentralisation", with which we shall deal later. Its "decentralisation" is as cynical in implication and purpose as its love for its new partners.

### 3. *The Socialist Party*

Let us now examine the other partner to this glorious "merger". The Socialist Party for election purposes is "only four years old". But otherwise it is the second oldest non-Communist political party in India. It was born in 1934. In January 1936 it adopted a "thesis" at Meerut which stated that "Marxism alone can guide the anti-imperialist forces to their ultimate destiny. Party members must therefore fully understand the technique of revolution, the theory and practice of the class struggle, the nature of the State and the processes leading to the socialist society." Later in the year appeared Shri Jayaprakash Narayan's now forgotten book, *Why Socialism*, a few extracts from which are very relevant here, for they represent the understanding of the leading minds of the Party sixteen years ago. (We should remember while reading these extracts that as far as international communism or the character of the Soviet State are concerned, they have not changed qualitatively to any degree since then.)

1. "While every national and international effort at solving the present crisis of capitalism has abjectly failed, Russia alone has kept her head high, has made steady progress in production and in raising the standard of living. In a period of extensive unemployment Russia alone is a country where there is a shortage of hands." (p. 33)

2. "Planning in reality is a process in which every unit of production, i.e., every factory and collective farm, and every unit of distribution, i.e., every cooperative and state store, take part. The men at the top co-ordinate, fit things together, guide and direct. Indeed Russia seems most anxious

to avoid centralisation of economic control. The country has already been divided into autonomous geographical units of production with administrative freedom and full creative initiative." (p. 34)

3. "When socialism is fully developed every one would put forth his best effort in the service of the community. . . . the problem is one of social psychology and commonsense and should not be at all difficult in practice. Let us first remember that a new type of human character would have been created. That selfishness would be looked down upon as a crime. In Soviet Russia grain stealers from collective farms would be shot. Such is the sanctity of social property." (p. 65) (In Russia then or now grain stealers would have been sent to the People's Courts, not "shot" — E.N.)

4. "What Gandhiji says today was said by church divines and philosophers of the old order in Europe at the dawn of the Industrial Revolution." (p. 70)

5. "I have again and again been faced with the naive question: Would not the masses, if every adult had a vote, capture the political machinery and run it in their own interest. The answer is most emphatically in the negative." (p. 76)

6. "Gandhiji's views are essentially what in socialist history is known as reformism. Its language is Indian but its substance is international. The chief interest of reformism lies in maintaining the established order of society. (p. 87)

7. "The socialist wants first to change the social environment and acquire full power over the State in order to be in possession of the means of propaganda and education. He creates the pre-dispossessing environment and then uses systematic methods of education. How does he change the environment? By organising the exploited and oppressed for the overthrow of the established order." (p. 98)

The Meerut Thesis of 1936 was elaborated into the Faizpur Thesis of 1937, which, after mentioning the supreme necessity for giving the Congress a working-class leadership, called upon all socialist "forces" (which at that time were the various suppressed Communist groups) to unite, saying:

"In the conditions of India the conscious leadership of the anti-imperialist movement falls on the socialist forces. These forces are unfortunately still divided. The party from the very beginning has stood for unity in the socialist ranks. It is of the utmost importance that in the Congress, in the mass movement outside, in all spheres of anti-imperialist activity a united lead is given. If socialists speak with a divided voice there will be utter confusion and it will only retard the national struggle. Till such unity is arrived at, the minimum that is necessary is agreement on the immediate tasks and lines of action. On the basis of this agreement the various socialist groups should work together till the time we are in a position to form a united party."

The party thus seemed to be developing healthily along a clear Marxist line of growth. It seemed to have a grasp of Marxist-Leninist ideology and the inevitable organisational principle that the working class could have but one party. The growing maturity of understanding was reflected in many of the party publications and in the party journal, *The Congress Socialist*, to which Sherwood Eddy, R. Palme Dutt and Harry Pollitt were frequent contributors. This period of health did not last long. The contact established between the leading minds of the Party and leaders of the working class soon began to disclose differences in interpretation as regards Marxist principles. Two trends soon developed within the party, one Marxist and based on the working class, the other opportunist and confused in ideology. For the Lahore conference, 1938, two theses were submitted, one by Syed Sajjad Zaheer, Dinkar Mehta and S. S. Batliwala and the other by Narendra Deva, Kamaladevi, Achut Patwardhan and Asoka Mehta.

The first thesis correctly laid emphasis on the supreme need for working-class leadership of the national struggle, the formation as early as possible of organs of united work with Communists, and the conversion of the Socialist Party into a mass party that could serve as a forum for Socialists from which steeled Marxists could be recruited for the United Marxist Party. The thesis said: "We must take up the task of raising the political



consciousness of the proletariat in the towns and in the countryside, of creating politically trained cadres from amongst them." Thus alone did they see the possibility of creating in India "a devoted cadre of anti-imperialist fighters trained in Marxist ideology and practice."

But this was not acceptable to the opportunist school whose real purpose, in spite of what Jayaprakash Narayan wrote, was to play politics with the Congress leadership and already had its eyes on Congress Working Committee membership. Their "thesis" scolded the Communists of India saying that "over emphasis on the distinction between the right and left in the Congress" was "irritating" and categorically stated that the Congress Socialist Party were not "rivals, not even potentially, of the Congress." To the demand that emphasis be laid on training the proletariat to lead the national movement, the opportunists' thesis merely replied that "The predominance of *petit bourgeois* in all the Socialist Parties of the world is not accidental. In India it is the expression of the peculiar conditions of the country."

To the plea that socialist unity be achieved in the shape of a strong Marxist Party with a clear working-class ideology the opportunist thesis replied: "The 'red' group, in the impact of realities had to shed its ultra leftism and increasingly to adopt the line of the C. S. P. When such adjustments began, the party in its anxiety for unity opened its doors to the members of the 'red' group with a view to its early merger in the Party. Such organic unity has not yet been realised because the Red group has raised, particularly during the last year, issues that balked such unity."

Shri Jayaprakash Narayan, whose ideology was still that of *Why Socialism*, stood midway between the two theses. He would not let go of either. But because his understanding of Marxism was as uncertain as his opposition to opportunism, he was able to convince himself that he was leading the party along a truly Marxist line. During his imprisonment in Deoli along with members of the Communist Party the differences between his peculiar brand of Congress Socialism and the views of the Communist Party of India became clearly defined

and he began to move closer to the authors of the opportunist thesis presented at Lahore.

The outbreak of war and the involvement of the Congress, almost against its will, in the last phase of the national struggle, brought a new set of circumstances into being and released new forces all over the country. The brutal repression of the most revolutionary nationalists after August 1942, brought a number of new men into the freedom fight. In the absence of the Congress leaders who had all retired into dignified and comfortable imprisonment in Ahmednagar and elsewhere, the struggle came under the nominal leadership of the Congress Socialists. The new cadres nominally accepted the leadership of the Congress Socialist Party. The Marxists among them were not satisfied with the "Marxism" of the Lahore Conference thesis. The "pure" nationalists amongst them looked for inspiration to Subhas Bose rather than to Shri Jayaprakash Narayan, in spite of his jail escape. But no ideological controversy was possible because the issue facing the Party and their new allies were immediate and tactical. But from early 1945 when it was becoming clear that the Congress meant ultimately to compromise on the national issue, these new cadres began to assert themselves. Their assumption at that time was that in spite of the opportunist group, Jayaprakash Narayan, specially after his experiences in the freedom struggle, would emphatically strive to make the Party Marxist. Therefore, they anxiously waited for his release and for the occasion when a new, larger and more militant party could meet and state its understanding and its objectives. These cadres however did not know that after his arrest in 1944, Shri Jayaprakash Narayan, under the long-distance direction of Shri Minoo Masani, had taken to serious study of such "fundamental" works as *Darkness at Noon*, *The Yogi and the Commissar*, *Managerial Revolution* and the works of Sidney Hook.

After this indoctrination it was natural for Shri Jayaprakash Narayan to agree with the philosophy adumbrated by Shri Asoka Mehta, Shri Achut Patwardhan, etc., but it became difficult for the August group to accept what these leaders were trying to plant

in the Party under the guise of Marxism. The new Party, after the lifting of the ban in 1946, thus began with a series of mental reservations corrupting its thought and capacity for organisation. Shri Purshottam Tricumdas was correct when he described its then internal condition, in his speech at Pachmarhi in March last, thus: "There were three main trends in the Party. (1) There was no need of a party separate from the Congress. (2) An Augusters Party be organised. (3) The Party be reorganised and vigorously pushed." According to Shri Purshottam Tricumdas who was the bitterest opponent of the second "trend", what happened was that "the third trend found general acceptance but the unfortunate part was that the main protagonists of the second trend acquired an undue influence and voice in shaping the party in which they did not believe... Unfortunately some of the leading members of the party felt that, without taking the leading protagonists of the second trend with them, the party could not go forward. Thus began a period of appeasement"—appeasement of the growing Marxist awareness of the Augusters with insincere formal acceptance of Marxism by the leaders who, in reality, were eagerly trying to undermine every principle of Marxist-Leninist theory. Occasionally, in informal conversations, the leaders did not hesitate to talk of "laying the ghost of Marxism". This period lasted from the Nasik Conference to the Patna Conference. It was during this period that "Democratic Socialism" began to be expounded as a new theory for India. But those who expounded it also took care always to postulate the falsehood that it was all in accordance with Marx and Lenin. Shri Jayaprakash Narayan, who had wholly forgotten his *Why Socialism*, enthusiastically mouthed the fly-blown confusions of European social democracy and insisted that that was how Lenin would have thought in India. After the Patna Conference the whole constitutional structure of the Party was changed and it was converted into a "mass party" opening its gates to every kind of opportunist. Along with this, an "ideological" change also took place. Shri Asoka Mehta assumed the position of the Party's chief theoretician.

Soon after the Patna Conference efforts began to be made in Bombay to bring Indian "Democratic Socialist" thinking in line with the "new thought" of the Bubers, the Silones, etc. The British Labour Party was unashamedly put forward as the model for all good socialist parties and a theoretical battle against Marxism began to be waged, the champion Asoka Mehta taking his stand on the thought of "pre-Marxist Socialism". As European social democracy had firmly accepted by then the reactionary Von Mises, Hayek and Robbins as the greatest economic thinkers, Shri Asoka Mehta also accepted them and built a tremendous castle in the air with many words of no meaning.

Shri Asoka's economics generously grants Marx partial success for his Labour Theory of Value; but with Von Mises our Socialist theoretician believes that it "breaks down completely when you come to handle day-to-day problems." His conclusion was that the Labour Theory of Value having only a "sociological significance", for actual day-to-day work in society, a theory of prices and complete freedom of choice in regard to production has to be accepted. That is what the London School of Economics had earlier come to believe. Such a belief had made them enthusiastic supporters of "controlled capitalism", "mixed economy" etc.

In regard to the continuation of the Marxist theory into the twentieth century, Shri Asoka Mehta held that it was not Lenin but Dadabhai Naoroji who "discovered the laws of motion of imperialism". From these and similar "discoveries" Shri Asoka Mehta progressed to the final postulation that it was not Stalin who was correct in regard to Russian economics in 1917 but Bukharin! Had Bukharin been allowed to contest an election in Russia, Shri Mehta tells us, he would have rejected the orthodox capitalist process of accumulating capital but he would also have rejected the process resorted to by Stalin. Bukharin, says Shri Asoka, would have accumulated capital "with the support of the people". Such original economic theories helped Shri Asoka to arrive at the basic truth about the twentieth century, viz., "Today constructive thinking, analysis of the problems that face a

socialist state is as relevant as critical thinking was in the days of Marx." Of course, being a democratic socialist, he will not grant constructive thought to Stalin or concede the fact that it was the Russian people who accumulated capital during the great Five Year Plans and not Joseph Stalin.

This being an age of "constructive" rather than of critical thinking, it naturally follows for Shri Asoka that our attitude to all "states" should be "positive". Thus, through a series of gyrations, our "Democratic Socialist" arrives with a pompous sense of originality at the same piteous point at which Ramsay Macdonald and all other stooges of capitalism had arrived in their day.

Naturally, social democracy in Europe or "Democratic Socialism" in India, realises sooner or later that in a period of crisis the masses become every day more disillusioned about the State, culture and morality and the relationships that engender them. They are forced to see that mere positivist prating will not give them the sanctions of popular support for achieving control of the government. When the masses become "critical", a "constructive" approach by those who want power ends in disappointment. This lesson history continuously teaches social democracy. But it never learns, because that would mean acceptance of proletarian philosophy and the end of the rule of property. Without the rule of property, social democracy knows that it can never achieve political expression and sustain its hopes of power through compromise. This is social democracy's continuous problem and it is to its credit that it never tires of trying to solve it by tricks. Also, it always hopes that no one will see through its tricks. The most common of these tricks is the whipping up of chauvinism wherever possible, as a counterblast to the inevitable spread of Marxist patriotism based on the scientific theory of nationalities.

It is on a foundation of chauvinist argument that social democracy usually attacks the international working-class movement as being part of Russian foreign-policy manoeuvres. In India, since the Socialist Party became social democratic, its fury of anti-Communism has

been on the ascendant. Jayaprakash Narayan who was once one of the most ardent admirers of the Russian revolutionary state has become one of the most rabid of its critics. Shri Asoka Mehta uses every lying argument mentioned in *The God That Failed*. The younger leaders of the Party brought up on a strict diet of Sidney Hook and other great "philosophers" of that order can count even in their sleep every "value" that the Soviets have destroyed.

This anti-Communism and anti-Sovietism which springs from fugitive chauvinism, brings in its turn confusion to the party. Shri Asoka in his post-election study, *The Political Mind of India*, discussing the future of the Communist Party, sadly confesses: "The mystiques of New Russia and New China will continue to bring strength to the Communist cause." Social Democracy must be anti-Russian and anti-Chinese because its destiny so compels it. But being anti-Russian and anti-Chinese makes it unpopular. Is this not a most tragic dilemma? And in this situation world democratic socialism offers our Socialists neither solace nor security. Since the end of the second World War eight or nine "international conferences" of social democratic parties have been held. Attempts were made at every one of these *seances* to bring into being a "Socialist International"; but the very chauvinism that these parties cultivate to defeat the internationalism of Communism also prevents them from coming to a broad-based understanding. They meet and talk and construct Comiscos and Federations of "Free Trade Unions", but the working class of the world spurns them and they end in nothing. You may ask: Why then does not social democracy give up its anti-communism, or at least not make it its chief propaganda line? Does it not realise, specially in situations like ours, that anti-communism only helps to isolate social democracy from the people who are in the throes of a tremendous crisis? The answer is that Social Democracy is not a positive ideology. It is a shadow of capitalism. It has, since the Second International, successively rejected every principle of Marxism, and is therefore incapable of having any appeal for the masses.

In India, as long as the political struggle with the imperialists lasted, it was easy for social democracy to cultivate its anti-Russianism and anti-communism under the cover of nationalism. With the end of that phase the "polarisation" which haunts Shri Asoka Mehta became inevitable. The minority of privilege and the majority which wants an international working-class philosophy to destroy privilege, got inevitably and clearly separated. In this situation "Democratic Socialism" does not know where to stand. Its curving logic convinces no one.

From Patna to the elections, Shri Asoka Mehta and Shri Jayaprakash Narayan (who had surrendered his thinking to the younger leader), tried valiantly to convince themselves, their party and the masses, that what they said had significance and that, on the basis of their statements and speeches, power could be snatched from the Congress. But neither auto-suggestion nor hypnotism worked. The enthusiasm of the leaders for advocating economic theories lessened. Each began to talk as he liked. The Party which was rickety even at Patna, openly cracked after the Madras Conference. On the straight issue of support for the Chinese Communist Party as against American imperialism in Korea, the leadership was almost defeated. Many militant working-class cadres and many who, in spite of Shri Mehta, had become Marxists, left the party. When the elections came, a brave effort was made to sink all ideology and fight a really opportunist battle. Big speeches were made. Loud claims of mass support were published. Two thousand candidates were produced like rabbits out of a hat. It all came to nothing. The masses were not interested. True, they were not capable of understanding the theory that modern capitalism and modern social democracy lived on a single economic philosophy. But they knew that there was no difference between the red cap and the white. The twenty-five lakhs the Socialist Party proudly claims to have spent on the elections were a dead loss.

That was the situation after the elections. The Socialist Party had tried straight Marxism, pure oppor-

unism and opportunist social democracy by turns, and had reached a dead end. Sri Asoka, alone perhaps among the leaders, continued to put his trust in Western social democratic concepts. The "boys" murmured. A strike or two were listlessly tried and given up in the middle, correctly according to social democratic tenets. Shri Jayaprakash Narayan fasted and finally gave up Marxism in its entirety. His confession is a heart-rending document. He says:

"For many years I have worshipped at the shrine of that goddess—dialectical materialism—which seemed to me more intellectually satisfying than any other philosophy.... It had become patent to me that materialism of any kind robs man of the means to become truly human.... It will be seen as an important corollary of this that only when materialism is transcended does individual man come into his own, and become an end in himself.."

Shri J. B. Kripalani who has carefully studied this document, established other corollaries to it, equally logical and correct. He said, just before the "merger":

"The basic ideology of the Socialist Party of India has changed. It no more believes in the Marxian interpretation of history, Marxian economics, Marxian ethics and Marxian dialectical materialism or any materialism whatsoever."

This certainly is no occasion to explain dialectical materialism. Even so, the deliberate misinterpretation of Karl Marx's understanding in regard to materialism to which almost every *status quoker* resorts, whether in India or abroad, makes it one's task to fight this nuisance as often as it crops up. Marx's "materialism" is "dialectical". When one seeks to understand that word it becomes clear that equal importance is attached to the willing mind and objective matter. The only demand made is that the mind be not interpreted as something extraneous, something totally outside and beyond matter. Frederick Engels wrote that men make their own history "but in the first place under very definite pre-suppositions and conditions. Among these the economic ones are



*finally decisive, but, the political etc. ones and indeed even the traditions which haunt human minds, also play a part although not the decisive one".* He acknowledged that he and Marx were "partly to blame for the fact that younger writers sometimes lay more stress on the economic side than is due to it. We had to emphasise this main principle in opposition to our adversaries and we had not always the time, the place or opportunity to allow the other elements involved in the interaction to come into their rights."

Shri Kripalani's analysis that the Socialist Party has rejected the entire argument of scientific socialism, is correct; but that does not establish that dialectical materialism is "any kind of materialism". It only proves that men whose self-interest requires them to "become ends in themselves" cannot ever understand dialectical materialism, however much they may have pretended to have done so for opportunist reasons.

Shri Kripalani's triumphant announcement of the Socialist Party's mental debacle may suggest that the Party is walking into the "merger" without any economic theory, free of all sense of history, solely as "individuals who are ends in themselves". This being the condition of the KMPP, it will certainly be a comfort for Shri Kripalani to imagine that his partners also are pure and free adventurers in parasite politics. That, however, is not the case. The Socialist Party is not totally free of theory. In proportion to the dwindling of Shri Asoka Mehta's pure Western social democracy, the Socialist Party's mind had been buttressed with the teachings of a new messiah and the strength of a new "Doctrine".

#### 4. *The Lohia Doctrine*

Dr. Rammanohar Lohia has always spurned a second place in the Party. He had industriously accumulated a philosophy of his own because he was the first amongst the leaders to realise that imitation Attlee-ism will not

cut any ice in India. This philosophy he adroitly passed on to the Party at Pachmarhi. He was sure that on the strength of his "Doctrine" he could achieve supreme theoretical leadership amongst his colleagues who had nothing else with which to rehabilitate their broken self-confidence. Both the desperate social democrat Asoka, and the enfeebled ex-Marxist Jayaprakash bowed before the doctrine and heralded it as a new synthesis that promised political salvation. Shri Narendra Deva was the only leader who in spite of his Kautskyism might have raised his voice against the "Doctrine". But he, luckily for Dr. Lohia, was away in China. Dr. Lohia, in spite of his theoretical supremacy, may again be forced into second place in the new Party by more efficient ambitions but, certainly, what makes the merger dangerous and therefore significant to the working class and other democratic sections of Indian society is Dr. Lohia's "Doctrine".

The "merger" of these parties is of no importance in terms of the mechanism of its achievement or of the actual political quantities that have merged. But as a vehicle for germ warfare—the "doctrine" being the germ in this case—the "merger" becomes worthy of attention for all scientific socialists, all those who want and are working for a democratic revolution in this country.

We shall first enumerate the chief ingredients of this "Doctrine" and then attempt an explanation of its significance.

Reduction of Dr. Lohia's thought process into any semblance of order is difficult, for his is one of those minds which rejects all systems as "totalitarian". As any argument arranged in a sequence of logic invariably appears to him to be regimented and communist, he insists on thinking like James Joyce in clouds of words and symbols, very resistant to analysis and simplification. But as the conclusions he derives from the fuzzy confusion of invented fact and misinterpreted history, which he calls a "Doctrine", are michievous in the extreme, we have to undertake the task of examining the process that allegedly leads to these conclusions.

In the first place the Lohia "Doctrine", he claims, becomes necessary because Socialism has no distinctive

doctrine. He grants patentship rights to "European Socialism" over the Welfare State idea, but he believes it has no "philosophy". What all the unfortunates from Proudhon to Asoka Mehta have been doing is, according to Dr. Lohia, foolishly grafting the "economic aims of communism" on the "general aims of capitalism or the liberal age". This, says Dr. Lohia, will not do. Socialism will achieve "power" only if it achieves a "mind". Socialism has to achieve "power" because the "kindred qualities and drives" of capitalism and communism "have made both of them equally irrelevant".

It is only Dr. Lohia, unique even amongst "socialists", who can dare say in 1952 that the qualities and drives of capitalism and communism are the same and that they are irrelevant.

The chief quality of capitalism is exclusiveness. Through the operation of categorically fixed social levels of privilege, property is sought to be accumulated by the smallest number of people in society. Communism's chief quality is its inclusiveness. Through the disestablishment of traditional privilege it seeks to separate property from the human right of satisfying needs. A hundred years after Karl Marx this at least should need no explanation—save, of course, to Dr. Lohia.

The chief "drive" of capitalism is accumulation. The chief "drive" of communism is dispersal. The capitalist, if and when he disperses, does so only to accumulate more. The communist, if and when he accumulates, does so to achieve greater and more efficient and more just dispersal. But Dr. Lohia will not understand this because, if he does so, his unique "Doctrine" will disappear.

To understand his doctrine, says the Doctor, one should understand the "theory of equal irrelevance"! The "theory of equal irrelevance" does not mean, he warns, a wishing of a plague on both your houses. The capitalist house which claims modern civilisation as its own should not be plagued because it has many wonderful things to its credit; yet the theory of "equal irrelevance" can be practised only by one who "refuses to be tempted by either"—that is capitalism or communism!

It is indeed a psychic adventure of the first order for any man—especially any politician—to assert in our day that capitalism and communism are irrelevant. Capitalism is as relevant as the atom bomb to the people of our age. Communism is as relevant as the Chinese rice that came to Madras. They obtrude on, and qualitatively change, every act and thought of almost every thinking man in every country. They are inescapable, objectively. Most intelligent men have to, and know they have to, choose one or the other, not as intellectual embellishments but as social realities. But Dr. Lohia is not an ordinarily intelligent man. He claims that he is one of the divine messengers of history. His need for a theory of “equal irrelevance” can become clear only when we understand the objective of the “Doctrine” he has laboriously constructed.

Socialism according to him should “reconcile the claims of stability and change”. It should “serve the needs of stability without strengthening *status quo* as well as the needs of change without fomenting chaos”. It is only a strengthened *status quo* that frightens our Doctor. Socialism however should see that chaos does not upset the present *status quo*.

The repudiation of a capitalist future while a capitalist present is maintained as a safeguard against chaos and the description of communism as an offspring and not the antithesis of capitalism come as naturally to Dr. Lohia as they came to Richard Weaver, author of *Ideas Have Consequences*, a great post-war effort to resuscitate Nazism. The “Theory of Equal Irrelevance” which is the first theory in the new “Doctrine” places Dr. Lohia on the side of present “stability”. Present stability means present relationships. But though he has placed himself on the side of present relationships in society, he wants to convince himself and others that any further development of capitalism is as dangerous as communism. Therefore, he demands that his followers regard any further degeneration of capitalism as well as any possibility of advance to communism as equally “irrelevant”. This, essentially, was what Hitler and Mussolini tried to do. Dr. Lohia, being a great idealist and a lover of the

*"liberal age", will not like the thought that his economic effort to regard capitalism and communism alike as irrelevant should place him so near these horrors.*

Hitler and Mussolini loudly declaimed against plutocracy and over-accumulation in areas of production other than their own. They bitterly opposed and treated as "irrelevant" the force of communist logic in the metamorphosis of their own national societies. That brought them to fascism as far as economic beliefs were concerned. Of course Dr. Lohia and his defenders will claim that Indian culture and the rest of his "doctrine" are safeguards against such a tragedy in the case of Praja Socialism. We also devoutly hope so; but modern history is strewn with cases of political liberals who became social fascists because they were incapable of understanding economics.

### *5. Irrelevance Theory*

Capitalism is irrelevant to us in India, according to Dr. Lohia, because we belong to that part of the world which he calls "the two-thirds". "In this two-thirds of the world, the task of capital formation is far too colossal for private capital to accomplish. Capitalism cannot even fulfil its primary function of providing capital to mankind". That is one of the primary statements of the "Doctrine". We had better examine it, not with a view to contesting it, but to get some kind of an idea of how the Doctor's mind works—which is very necessary for controverting later his ignorant assertions about Communism, on which assertions quite a number of potentially-useful young men are being fed in the new Party.

Dr. Lohia believes that capitalism is some kind of philosophy. It has "tasks", "functions", etc., in his opinion. This assumption is due to careless thinking. Capitalism has no social "tasks". The capitalist has desires. The capitalist, according to Marx, "shares with the miser the passion for wealth as wealth. But that which in the miser is a mere idiosyncrasy is in the capitalist the effect of the social mechanism of which he is but one of the

wheels". The capitalist does not read a "doctrine" like or unlike Dr. Lohia's and become a capitalist. Arranged as our society is, the capitalist is a man who can make profit in a particular way. The "arrangement" of society is capitalism. Therefore it is as relevant for Dr. Lohia as for Mr. Birla.

It is not "the task of private capital" to form capital. The task that the private capitalist sets out to perform is to make more and more profits. If it seems to him that these profits grow greater and greater through accumulation of capital in any particular area, the private capitalist will try to achieve such accumulation. If on the other hand it seems to him that it is not possible to increase profit through accumulation of capital he will seek other ways of making profit. In the two-thirds of the world (about which Dr. Lohia always talks as Columbus might have talked about his discovery, America), capitalists, trying to make more profits through accumulation of capital, often realise there is a quicker way. They come to believe that they can make quicker profits by agreeing to become the agents of capitalists abroad who have accumulated a great deal more of capital than is necessary and therefore want to sell things at as high prices as possible. Indian capitalists therefore very often become, one way or another, agents of foreign capital and give up their own efforts to "accumulate industrial capital".

Capitalism, in all its history, has never regarded "providing capital to mankind" as its "primary function". All capitalists regard, as their primary function, the extortion of as much profit as they can out of society. All societies which facilitate such extortion are capitalist societies. The fact that in India accumulation of capital has reached only a certain level and that in America it has reached another level does not by itself qualitatively differentiate society in these two countries. (What qualitatively differentiates them are other economic facts which we need not go into here.) The task of capital formation not being a "task" set by God for capitalists, it can be performed by others, however colossal it may appear to Dr. Lohia.

*What Dr. Lohia should realise if he is to make his pet "two-third—one-third" contradiction intelligible even to himself, is that accumulation of capital in the West, having begun earlier, the capitalists of those countries are today in a position to prevent capitalists in India and other Asian countries from making as much profit through local production as they would like to. Therefore the former are often able to blackmail the latter into becoming agents. This only makes capitalism more "relevant" for us than at any time in our history. By saying that capitalism is not "relevant" we will not be preventing our capitalists from becoming mere agents. Capitalism is most relevant for the great "two-thirds" of the world because it is allowed to, and does, take away from this and other undeveloped countries great quantities of surplus value. If Dr. Lohia and others like him are sincere when they say that they are opposed to capitalism, they would try to make their people understand that the profit capitalism makes and takes away is the congealed work of the people of these countries. On the other hand they go about proclaiming that capitalism is "irrelevant" and employ themselves in constructing imaginary positions outside economic reality. This proves that what they really want is the strengthening of the hands of capitalists abroad.*

Already capitalist economists have begun re-interpreting theories about profits, which clearly proves that pushing the products of over-capitalised industry into under-developed areas has become "the primary task" of the capitalists in our epoch. R. G. Hawtrey, for example, clearly defines Profit as "remuneration for selling power" in his book *The Balance of Payments and the Standard of Living*. All who share in organising selling power are to be remunerated. Such organisation is becoming cosmopolitan in concept and mechanism. It is a very relevant economic fact. To increase its "selling power" capitalism has established an atomic-bomb store which at least should be relevant for such a great humanist as Dr. Lohia. Though he may not realise the actual significance of his own words, Dr. Lohia says in his famous "Doctrine": "Capitalism imposed the peace of death on Asia and else-

where, caused their populations to grow and their economic apparatus to decay." Is it because he considers all Asia dead already that capitalism has become, for him, irrelevant for Asia?

The other leg of the "Theory of Equal Irrelevance" is the irrelevance of communism for all Good Socialists and those who have merged with them. Communism, says Dr. Lohia, is irrelevant for the people of the "two-thirds" and specially for the people of India because "the whole communist doctrine and its general theory on human civilisation is proving faulty, for capitalist relations of production are snapping where the forces of production are least clamorous. This defeat of communist theory may be left aside, but the practical disasters of communist victories in areas of high density and low technology must be keenly appreciated."

Communism indeed has a general theory of human civilization. That theory says at any given moment in time human civilisation—the various institutions of domestic and communal living, the various conventions of physical and intellectual communion between individuals in society, the laws that govern their behaviour, and the degree of peace and comfort that individuals enjoy and use to recreate themselves—is determined by history and the present methods men adopt to utilise surrounding matter.

This general theory has not been found "faulty". Far from it, year by year, more and more people all over the world are realising in their experience the supreme truth of the formulation. Dogmatic assertion to the contrary will not change truth.

It was not however the general theory of communism which stated that capitalist forces of production will give way, in the first instance, necessarily in regions of high industrialism. The originator of the general theory, working on the history of capitalism, came to the conclusion that the capitalist order would produce its own grave-diggers. Living as he did in what can be called the competitive phase of capitalism and being a rationalist, he did not attempt to predict what would happen to it in another epoch. But because his "general theory" was



correct, it was possible for one who followed him to state exactly what Dr. Lohia says has not been included in communist theory. Dr. Lohia may not have heard of Lenin and his development of Marxist theory, busy as he always is elaborating his own "Doctrine". However, Lenin did live and he did say that it would be at its weakest link that the capitalist chain would break. Successively, it broke in Russia, and then in China.

Dr. Lohia's next contention is that if communism establishes itself in areas of high density of population and low technology, there will be disasters. To establish this he says in his "Doctrine":

"Already China's terror has surpassed in some ways that of Russia and, should the average of one or one and a half acre per agricultural worker be pressed into the moulds of communist rationalisation, there is no knowing to what lengths the spirit of man may have to be suppressed."

This is cheap and evil propaganda controverted before it is spawned by men of integrity of every country. Those who know anything of China before communism took control of the country know that for the Chinese Communist Party there was no need to use terror. Millions of citizens in every big Chinese city went wild with joy when the New Order marched in. Whole armies turned to the new leaders of the country. But there is no need to expend any effort in contradicting the Doctor about China of all places!

Another area of high density of population and low technology that came under the communist order after the last war was Poland. It is the largest and most populous country in Eastern Europe. What were the "disasters" that overtook Poland? Immediate land reforms, nationalisation of large-scale business and economic planning on a national scale. We do not know how many millions were killed in the nightmares that Dr. Lohia must frequently be having about Poland. But the rest of the world has generally come to the conclusion that most people in that country go about their business more happily than before. Prof. Sweezy who is an American and has not yet, we believe, got into the clutches

of the Un-American Committee, says: "When account is taken of the fact that redistribution of land is being accompanied by an extensive migration from the overcrowded regions of central and southern Poland, it will be seen that this is indeed a far-reaching agrarian reform which should go a long way towards solving that most intractable problem, the problem of rural over-population with its attendant evils of poverty, ignorance and wasted manpower."

As for the "disaster" that fell on industry in Poland in the shape of the nationalisation law we need only quote part of M. Minc's speech when he introduced it, to prove how "terrible" it is. Said Poland's Minister of Industry:

"In this economic pattern of democratic Poland the development of co-operative societies occupies an essential position. It is not our intention to confine their activities to distribution of goods, to the part of an intermediary between producer and consumer. We are of the opinion that the co-operative societies should also take an important place in the production in various branches of industry. Next to the big undertakings administered by the State the cooperative form of economy should be predominant."

The Doctor Saheb being "scientific" it is not just on the basis of mere nightmare "disasters" that he has come to the conclusion that communism is irrelevant. Communism is also irrelevant for the "two-thirds" because this area is a low-technology area and communism has no solution for its problems. "Communism", he says, "inherits from capitalism its technique of production. It only seeks to smash the capitalist relations of production.... What capitalist technology has meant to two-thirds of the world has not been digested in communist theory." Again, "capitalism and communism share a certain community of economic aims in so far as the latter inherits the former's processes and forces of production and alters only its relations."

The Doctor appears to be in a great state of confusion about "technology". What is technology? It is a science. Science is like language. It is not something like law or

morality. The latter are superstructures over relationships brought about by certain conditions of production. They change according to the changes in relationships dictated by changes in methods of production. There are laws peculiar to feudal society, as there are those peculiar to capitalist society. There are the moral codes for marwari businessman different from those for bourgeois bohemian. We can therefore talk of capitalist laws, capitalist morality. But when it comes to science or language there is no capitalist peculiarity that we can rationally attach to them. They are the results of the clash of mind on matter. As long as this clash continues to be a process, science and language continue to grow. They are syntheses and act positively on environment, as weapons of the mind. In themselves they are neither capitalist nor feudalist nor proletarian.

Lenin, discussing science and technology, once wrote:

"Modern socialist consciousness can rise only on the basis of profound scientific knowledge. Indeed, modern economic science is as much a condition of socialist production as say modern technology, and the proletariat can create neither the one nor the other, no matter how much it may desire to do so. Both arise out of the modern social process. The vehicle of science is not the proletariat but the bourgeois intelligentsia."

But the use to which the feudal lord or the capitalist or the proletarian puts science is certainly distinctive. Technology as such is neither capitalist nor communist. Similarly language as such is not the weapon of any particular class. It, however, is used for different purposes by different classes. This should be simple even for Dr. Lohia.

If by technology Dr. Lohia means science, knowledge of the various laws of physics and chemistry, of biology, geology and astronomy, etc., and the combination of these laws for making production easier and quicker, it should not be difficult for him to understand that the uses to which such knowledge is put by monopoly capitalism, on the one hand, and communism, on the other, are diametrically opposite. Capitalist accumulation is

primarily meant to achieve maximum profit out of minimum production, whereas communism always aims at maximum production for the sake of maximum consumption. These different social aims cannot become identical or similar merely because the technology of production and the physics and chemistry on which that technology is based are the same. Yet that is what Dr. Lohia explicitly means when he says that "capitalism and communism share a community of economic aims in so far as the latter inherits the former's processes." This is like saying that the American aggressor and the Korean defender are aiming at Dr. Lohia, not at each other, because both use guns.

The chief economic aim of communism in the twentieth century is to free the world forces of production from the miserly grasp of monopoly capitalism. The chief economic aim of monopoly capitalism is to arrange production all over the world so that the greatest quantity of profit will be available to those capitalists who form the apex of the system.

Except to Dr. Lohia, it is tolerably well known that the capitalist and communist uses of technology differ most fundamentally. While the communist has always used it to increase production in every field, the capitalist will permit technology to change any given method of production only to the degree it increases his profit. Between the year 1900 and 1915 "monopoly in the older British industries largely took the form of organising the old mills and steel works into price-fixing rings and combines, with technical modernisation kept in check so as to safeguard profits on the older plants." (Heinemann and Klugmann in an article in *The Modern Quarterly*, London, Spring 1947.) The same process is observable in the textile mill industry in our country today, as also in the embargo placed by the U.S. Government on the synthetic production of rubber. On the other hand, the continuous application of every scientific discovery or technological advance to production in the U.S.S.R. has been noted by every visitor to that country after 1917.

Thus, if the economic and social aims of capitalism are irrevocably opposed, the use of the same technology

by them cannot make them co-sharers of a single interest. Dr. Lohia's interpretation of economic aims is limited and mechanical. When he talks of capitalism and communism sharing a single economic aim he means that, using the same technology, both capitalists in America and communist planners in Russia arrived at the inevitable use of complicated machinery to produce the goods they wanted and that they produced them in as large quantities as their different motives impelled them to. The larger social significance of economic aims is "irrelevant" to him. This assembly of production goods, whether for maximum production or for maximum profit he calls "centralisation". Use of the same technology, he finds, leads to "centralisation" in both countries. He then postulates that however advantageous this "centralisation" may be to the Russian people or the American capitalists, it is incompatible with conditions in India. He therefore charges communist theory with not having sufficiently grasped the harmful effects on undeveloped economies of "capitalist technology".

Here again, we come across that characteristic incapacity for economic thought which recurs in every Lohian formulation. It was not the "technology of modern industry" that devastated and pauperised conquered Asia. It was not the fact that somewhere goods could be produced ten-fold and hundred-fold through the use of steam and electricity that prevented the maintenance of Indian handicrafts in a stable feudal balance. What pauperised Asia was the fact that this technology was made use of by capitalists who had ceased to be master-craftsmen, ceased to be industrialists even, and had become finance-capitalists, monopolists. It is in terms of the tremendous qualitative changes brought about in capitalism as the result of accumulation that communist theory "digests" the effects of capitalism on the undeveloped part of the world. In the seventh chapter of *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, where Lenin controverts the Kautskyite superstition about "ultra-imperialism" being a force that mitigates the internal contradictions of capitalism, he carefully develops the theory of the uneven development of capital and the effects of

this on the areas exploited by monopoly capitalist forces of production. "Finance capital and trusts," he says, "are increasing instead of diminishing the differences in the rate of development of various parts of the world economy." Earlier, he had pointed out that "there are two areas where capitalism is not strongly developed; Russia and Eastern Asia. In the former the density of population is very low; in the latter it is very high. In the former political concentration is very high. In the latter it does not exist." Quite recently a communist economist Leo Mendelessohn, working out the Leninist formulation into actual figures of industrial production in monopoly-capitalist countries and the undeveloped areas came to the conclusion that, if the rate of development of industrial production in the monopoly-controlled areas was 197, the rate of change in the undeveloped countries was —10. Communism has "digested" very well the effect on undeveloped economies of "centralisation" of industrial potential by monopoly.

## 6. *Centralisation*

Dr. Lohia, because he is painfully aware of the effects on Asia of the concentration of industrial capital in the hands of Western monopolists, has developed an irrational fear of every kind of organic intensification of capital. Centralised production, he says, will mean a centralised party and a centralised State. Industry under communism will become senseless mass production, capable of use only as a means of exploitation of urban or semi-industrialised areas by a monster party. Need he labour under this terrible obsession?

As the chief economic aim of communism is maximum distribution on the basis of maximum production, the quantity of machinery assembled together, the ways in which it is assembled and the laws governing such assembly, are all different from the "drives" that operate in the accumulation of capital, and its control by finance,

under capitalism. While centralisation is an inevitable result of inevitably imperfect competition under capitalism, communism is never committed to centralisation for centralisation's sake.

The characteristics of "centralised" communist parties do not derive from the economic means adopted by the Soviet State to industrialise its economy. Communist parties are working-class parties designed to advance class struggle in an age of capitalism and their centralisation is democratic in concept and practice. Communist parties do not and cannot come into being on the basis of a "property" interest. They are "centralised" because for the purpose of disestablishment of capitalist and other forms of property, it is necessary that they be militant, disciplined and efficient. But on these issues Dr. Lohia's ideas need not be discussed at all because he is not open to conviction by arguments which unfortunately spell the doom of the property-owning class he both consciously and unconsciously seeks to defend.

The degree to which centralisation of production goods has been achieved in Russia cannot alter the essentially democratic-centralist character of the Communist Party of Russia or the State it has established, to any form of autocracy or personalist control. This has been testified by visitors of every description.

Lest the bogey of "centralisation" raised by Dr. Lohia should frighten others who have not his class compulsions, we must examine very summarily the origin and history of industrialism under the Communist Party in Russia. "Soviet industry," say Gurevitch and Partigul in a recent study of economic conditions in Russia in the Five Year Plan period, "grew on the basis of the continuous expansion of the home market." No capitalist industry develops or has developed on this basis. The home market takes a second place the moment the wage-price contradiction asserts itself, and the entire driving power of capitalist industry thenceforward becomes "selling power", as Hawtrey calls it, abroad. The organisation of an industry based on an ever-expanding home market has to be totally different from that of an industry

which has to seek surplus value in distant areas in order to mitigate the class struggle at home. The location of heavy industries in the capitalist countries and in the land of communism illustrates this point. The tendency in the former is endlessly to merge individually-owned production through profit-seeking national and international cartels, to farm out different phases of production to different interests, and to achieve supreme control over the entire machinery of distribution. The relationship that has been established in the machine-tool industry of the U.S.A. and Britain and all the satellite countries is very illuminating.

On the other hand the objective sought by communist industry is wholly different. Maurice Dobb in his book *Soviet Economic Development Since 1917* says:

"The general picture that we seem to receive from the crowded, quickly-changing canvas of Soviet economic life is of eight or nine main industrial regions each raised upon the foundation of its manpower-fuel-mineral situation. Within each region the order of determination has generally been from mineral and power resources to heavy industry and from heavy industry to transport facilities, the growth of towns and the founding of light industries which cater for the consumer.... Specification has on the whole been subordinated to the aim of creating so far as possible 'a balanced economy' within each region.... In achieving variety and dispersion of economic activities within each region, the main role has been reserved for light and small scale industries. While these will necessarily cluster to a large extent round the large centres of population where heavy industry is located, their presence will add variety to the types of employment in the neighbourhood of these focal points of urban development and so far as the planning of them is guided by the emphasis on dispersal and local orientation, they seem likely to serve as the basis of numerous more scattered and variegated small urban concentrations, further distant from the coalfields and mineral deposits."

The total effect of the industrial programme of the Communist Party of Russia was summarised by N. Mikhailov in his *Soviet Geography* thus:



*"The industrialisation of rural districts, formerly backward, neglected and uncivilised, is giving birth to a large number of towns. Agricultural labour is becoming a form of industrial labour and the village is aspiring towards advanced urban culture. New towns are springing up and are helping to overcome the violent opposition between the old town and the old village which impeded productive development—new towns with a different complexion, a different significance, a different destiny and a different national geography."*

Capitalist centralisation of industry has definitely been rejected by communism. Why it has to do so, if it practises the theories of Marxist economics, should be clear. Concentration of capital in a wholly private-enterprise economy is motivated by the urge to increase constant capital and to lessen variable capital. Where the new quantity of surplus value created through the increased difference between these cannot be appropriated as private profit, there is no urge to reduce variable capital. In proportion to the total increase of one there is an increase of the other also in communist industrialisation, first through an increase in the number of workers up to the limit of universal employment and then, through dispersal of surplus value as social amenities and through reduction of prices, that is, through a steady and continuous raising of the standard of living.

In other areas of communist control also, the fact that revolutionary concentration of industrial potential has nothing in common with capitalist amassing of machinery is every day becoming clearer. To the degree that Chinese industry has been developed after liberation, that development fully bears out the claim that regional self-sufficiency is always the chief economic aim. The first industrial project undertaken by the People's Government was the reorganisation of the railways. Chiang Kai-shek's industrial policy, directed by the Four Families, was to corner commodities as much as possible and blackmail the people, sharing the huge profits of a national black market with American imperialists. The People's Government realised that industrial progress would be possible only through co-ordination of production and

distribution, regional organization, etc. For this, railway re-organisation and actual "decentralisation" of the economy was the chief weapon and priority was given to it.

This is a practical and obvious exercise in true decentralisation in the sense that the industries which had been centralised on behalf of a group of imperialist stooges in the period of Chiang Kai-shek are to be put into immediate living contact with the rest of the economy. The general economic policy defined in the *Common Programme of the People's Political Consultative Council* says that "Economic policy should reflect the special economic features of the system of People's Democracy and the fact that it comprises of more than one system." The Programme enumerates five sectors of economy—State, Co-operative, Private Peasant, Private Capitalist-artisan and the Sector of State Capitalism. The Programme envisages encouragement to the development of the co-operative sector and granting it various advantages and preferential treatment as well as encouragement to the activities of all private enterprises "beneficial to the people". In the "centralised" industries taken over by the State "workers through the medium of administrative committees will take part in the administration of enterprises."

## 7. *Communism and Power*

Thus in the two most important countries where Communist Parties have assumed control, we can see that though the technology and methods of assembling machinery as developed in the period of capitalism were taken over, the objectives sought through them are real economic decentralisation, levelling up the differences between town and country, regional self-sufficiency, and making the eventual control of the economy possible without centralised political authority. The communist understands that for "decentralised" economy, for ridding production of all elements of profit motive, for arranging

distribution without any consideration of privilege, for removing in fact all the social and economic reasons for class struggle and oppression, it is necessary to capture political power on behalf of the working class. It is necessary to establish a State which believes and works honestly for a future when there need be no State. But the Communist has learnt by experience that societies in different phases of economic development and therefore in different cultural conditions, cannot be led through democracy to socialism and from socialism to communism without a strong state that can direct and control the transition. The State and its characteristics, the Communist believes, will depend upon the rate at which the different nations and human society at large achieve greater and greater production and ever-extensive distribution.

This of course Dr. Lohia does not accept. A State that will strive for statelessness is beyond his reactionary comprehension. Because the Communist does not abjure all States immediately he concludes that "the class struggle of communism is a doctrine of deceit, lies, treason, tyranny, decay of culture and also of assistance to capitalism until a successful revolt takes place." And when such a "revolt" does take place, "it does not cease to be a doctrine of evil behaviour, for its economic aim of mass production and abundant living is unachievable in two-thirds of the world." It is unachievable because "communist rationalisation of these [undeveloped] economies or a hot-house nurturing of productive forces is impossible except through mass murder unknown to history, and then too almost impossible." The Doctor can go on and round like that infinitely.

The above-mentioned tendencies in Communism, says the Doctor, cause it to "strive for power to the exclusion of all else." Communism because it is concerned only with power encourages "all such struggles and forms of party organization in which no matter how much the general aims of society are sacrificed power appears to ensue."

Communism is concerned only with power. For the sake of power it casts off the general aims of society.

Communism organises itself exclusively for the seizure of power. Therefore the revolutions it achieves only end in changes in the mechanism of power. That seems to be what the Doctor means. Communism is concerned with power, it is true; but in the sense that it wants to take away the various institutions and machines used for suppressing people from the hands of the wealthy and give them to the workers who are the majority of the people. That is the aim of all the struggles conducted by Communists. No "general aims" of society are sacrificed in these struggles. Communism teaches people whose minds are healthy that they should not submit to rule by exploiters. But as we said, closed minds like the Doctor's are beyond communism's understanding of class struggle.

### 8. *Theory of Immediacy*

The Doctor believes that when communism gets power, "it will be unable to achieve its economic aim of the big machine in industry and the combine in agriculture in two-thirds of the world." As it fails to achieve this economic objective, "it will be marked by barren cruelty" when it is politically victorious and "barren hate" while it carries on the struggle. Therefore Praja-Socialism must see that "not remote, but immediate tests" be applied to the expression of class struggle. "Immediate tests would ever keep in the foreground issues of democracy and culture."

What are the issues of democracy and culture in our situation? The chief issue of democracy is the immediate transfer of administrative power from the hands of a clique of Congressmen and bureaucrats, who chiefly act in the interests of a few very rich people, to the hands of the people at large. The Communist Party of India says that this can be done if strong United Fronts of the people are formed. The Doctor and his friends say they will not allow the formation of such fronts. Who is

making class struggle an "issue of democracy" and who is sabotaging it?

When has any Communist Party prevented an issue of true people's culture being placed "in the foreground" of its struggle programme?

But all this will not lessen for the Doctor the "irrelevance" of Communism. Because of that "irrelevance" the Doctor offers his brilliant "Theory of Immediacy" to *Asian Socialism*.

*All the positive sutras of his "Doctrine" are based on the "Theory of Immediacy". What are these sutras?*

1. Socialist struggles should neither aid capitalism nor communism.
2. They should be immediately justifiable in terms of democracy and culture.
3. The economic theory behind socialist action and policy should not in any way encourage the big machine.

Before examining these *sutras* in detail and understanding the unpatriotic and renegade conclusions that inevitably arise from them, let us assure the Doctor that though he considers himself original, there have been other agents of reaction who talked very much like him. Karl Mannheim (one of Shri Asoka's teachers) in his *Ideology and Utopia* and *Freedom, Power and Democratic Planning*, also came to the conclusion that only a "Third Doctrine" would save the world. He called both capitalism and communism totalitarian. He advocated the correction of Democracy through "large pressure groups which muster adequate rational understanding of the situation, and self-restraint." But Mannheim had greater clarity than the Doctor. He at least knew and admitted that people who talk like him "are interested in preserving the existing order". He also knew that this kind of pragmatic thinking would bring him very near German and Italian fascism about which he had his own opinion: "However reprehensible their responses to the challenges, at least they [the Fascists and the Nazis] made an attempt to deal with the situation."

Keynes was another economist turned philosopher who said practically the same things, viz. "The Com-

munist Party is the party of catastrophe" (Lohia—party of chaos); "the Conservative Party was a diehard party." But he again was more honest and said that capitalism, in spite of everything, should be defended. The Doctor Saheb, however, though he means what people like him have been saying from the very beginning of the general crisis of capitalism, pretends that he cannot accept their conclusions. It is on the basis of these pretensions that he claims originality for his new "Doctrine".

When Proudhon put forth his "doctrine", Marx said, "He wants to be the synthesis; he is a composite error."

However, there is no point in proving Dr. Lohia unoriginal because it is our contention that through his "Doctrine", through the economic frauds being given currency by Praja-Socialism and through the political forms and philosophy it advocates, he is trying most "originally" to foul and corrupt revolutionary thought in India.

The first *sutra* in the "theory of immediacy" demands that struggles should aid neither capitalism nor communism. This demand is easy to make; but it can never be realised. The history of the epoch of the general crisis of capitalism establishes this in the case of political parties and individuals, in India as well as all over the world. The whole sad story of Western Social Democracy proves this. Every social democratic party claimed a doctrine of struggle outside communism. Every social democratic party is today a nervous jackal timidly howling for shares in the carcasses left behind after each 'kill' by imperialism. The inevitability of this process was realised and pointed out by Lenin in his *Imperialism* when he clear-sightedly said that "the most pronounced political distinctions diminish to an extreme degree in the epoch of imperialism"—a fact even more clearly brought out by Dr. Lohia's conviction that "in the long run the Congress party is without doubt a superior to the Communist Party, for one may reasonably expect it to act democratically and nationally."

In their personal histories also, Trotsky, Ramsay Macdonald, Tito and Jayaprakash Narayan exemplify most tragically the impossibility of a "third camp" posi-

tion when the economic contradictions between capitalist and socialist forces of production become clear.

At no period in human history have two philosophies, one of the past and the other of the future, been made so sharply distinct to average human intelligence as to-day. Monopoly control and exploitation of all sections of society (except monopoly itself) is capitalism's chief economic characteristic. Socially, it is clothed in racialism, bureaucracy, and a culture of cosmopolitan luxury. Politically, capitalism is understood in every part of the world as a rule by desperately cruel or despicably cringing cliques alternately snarling at and whining to America.

Communism's economics of maximum production, its social message of racial and national equality, its culture of individual sacrifice for the community of man, and its politics based on international democratic progress under the banner of the working people, appeal to larger and ever larger sections of society.

Those who are not for progress today cannot but join the side of reaction. While the Doctor asks his followers to reject both capitalism and communism, the people of the world have rejected the "third position" as irrelevant. Any talk of the possibility of socialist "struggles" that would aid neither capitalism nor communism in our situation is therefore entirely futile.

Whenever "struggles" have been attempted in recent times by people who stand between the two opposed forces, they have come to nothing. The "struggles" conducted by the Socialist leaders confirm this. Dr. Lohia's dignified presentation of a charter to the President at the head of a group of "press-ganged" peasants, and his equally dignified silence ever since about the glorious charter; Shri Asoka's tactical "withdrawal" from Bombay in the crucial days of the 1950 textile strike; Shri Jayaprakash Narayan's uplifting fast on behalf of the postmen—these are the best examples of "struggles" outside and beyond the contamination of communism. They are also examples of struggles that led nowhere.

The second *sutra* of the "Theory of Immediacy" demands that all Socialist policies and actions should be

immediately justifiable. No explanation of revolutionary "tactics or strategy" will be tolerated by the Doctor who has a terrible distrust of time. Incapable of comprehending reality as a process, his opportunist impatience insists that every act and phenomenon bear the stamp of finality in itself. Distrust of the future is part and parcel of bourgeois culture which piteously comes, as in the case of Jayaprakash Narayan, to an understanding of the "individual as an end in himself". The communist is a rational optimist and can therefore assume a process and a collective life. He can calculate on the basis of a future.

An imperative demand for immediate justifiability naturally limits the scope of all political action to traditional conventions. Immediate justifiability means justifying a struggle in terms of present moral codes and legal conveniences. These codes and conveniences are built by capitalism to perpetuate itself. They are "the general principles" of those who control society. No revolutionary philosophy or ethic can be tolerated in a struggle that has to be "immediately justifiable" for everyone in society. Communism never has undertaken any struggle that cannot be justified in terms of the rights of humanity as against property. The Doctor's struggles on the other hand will be justifiable only in terms of present property against humanity. Economic explanations that transgress the sacred moral codes or social relationships approved by the current ideas of privilege, cannot be accepted in Dr. Lohia's "Doctrine of Immediacy". Firmly anchored to the *status quo*, Praja-Socialist struggles on the "immediacy" prescription will become stunts like the famous Nepal Day demonstration in New Delhi which culminated in the mango incident, or cultural competitions between Congress and Praja Satyagrahis. Insistence on "immediacy" has already compelled Shri Asoka to give up the "general strike myth" of Sorel in which he once seemed to believe. It has compelled the Hind Mazdur Sabha to advocate the theory of trade unions wholly free of "politics". It has sent Shri Jayaprakash Narayan first to a Nursing Home and then to a village because these great leaders submit each "struggle" to immediate moral codes which dictate that it is best not to struggle. This



is inescapable for, in our day, whoever rejects communism must needs earn his keep in the house of capitalism.

### 9. 'Big' and 'Small' Machines

The third and most important demand made in the "Doctrine" is the economic demand. As it is in this that the motive of un-patriotic mischief concretises itself, we should examine it carefully and realise all its implications. Dr. Lohia does not want the encouragement of the "big machine" or the "agricultural combine". This is not "a rejection of the machine," he comforts us, "but it is a rejection of the situation in which it and its counterpart the Leviathan State predominate."

What is "a rejection" of a situation?

A situation in history represents a set of relationships in society and between man and nature. Those relationships, however non-material and human they appear, have at their root the ways in which man makes the things he requires for living. Such relations grow up through countless centuries, through countless revolutions. The "Leviathan State" which Dr. Lohia hates is a relationship established by people who want monstrous profits for themselves. They use the "big machine" because they can make big profits. The economic fact that the big machine produces more than many small machines is not a significant fact for them. But it is a significant economic fact for those who use the products of the machine. Economically, the big machine is an advance on small machines if it can produce more. And man never gives up what is better for what is worse. History will not permit man to "reject" the big machine merely because Dr. Lohia asks it to.

The Leviathan State of capitalism, that is a State which is the tool of a small group of persons within society, is not a "counterpart" of the big machine. It is a means to prevent the people from controlling the "big

machine" which, historically, is the result of their collective effort through many ages. Communism rejects this state that seeks to expropriate the people from what is theirs by right of work. Communism says that, for making the rejection effective, revolutions are necessary—revolutions during which the hitherto expropriated majority will take control of the big machine, make the maximum use of it and prevent the growth of expropriating minorities.

Dr. Lohia rejects the big machine not merely because, in his opinion, it leads to the "Leviathan State". As an Indian he rejects it because he is convinced that the big machine is impracticable in the "two-thirds" of the world. It is impracticable because:

(a) "To provide to such enormous populations the tools of agriculture and industry as would bring them on a line with Europe and the U.S. is an impossible task."

(b) "To turn a peasant of India, Java or China into a worker, a cultivator into a tractor-driver or to provide a factory worker of these areas with the concentrated capital of modern technology may or may not be a high endeavour but its achievement is impossible and it shall stay a barren and cruel effort."

(c) "Where lands average between one acre and one and a half as in India and China the communist modernisation of agriculture would throw tens of crores of people out of work. They could not be absorbed in modern industry for that too would require an unachievable capital."

(d) "Planning on the basis of big machinery and agricultural combines would take fifty years under communism during which there will be ruthless suppression. A capital investment of Rs. 50,000 crores for India would be required."

(e) "Assuming that an annual capital investment of Rs. 500 crores for a first five year plan were somehow available to Communist India, it would at best provide rational employment to one million persons on the basis of Rs. 5,000 worth of tools per worker." "Very limited regions and small sectors of economy could benefit."

Therefore the Doctor "rejects" the big machine and

discovers a small one. It is just as if it were a convenient fairy tale. He knows exactly what is to be done:

“A new mode of rationalisation and a corresponding mode of ownership will have to be devised. The small unit machine run by electricity or oil is the answer. Only a few such machines exist. Many more will have to be invented. . . . This machine shall be available to hamlet and town as much as to city; it may be a maid of all work or as many as possible, it shall be built on the principle of immediacy in operation and output; it shall not require a large capital investment. . . . it is the embodiment of the whole principle of decentralisation in space and time, so as to avoid complexity and achieve immediacy.”

There is no point in wasting systematic thought on such arrant nonsense, except perhaps to marvel at a social situation which permits men who can think and talk in this manner to pass for politicians and leaders of political parties! A machine that is decentralised in space and time! A machine that is a maid of all work! A machine that will use “electricity or oil”! A machine built on the principle of immediacy!! It reads like the hopes of some necromancer crying to his favourite genie.

We are in the atomic age. Tremendous prime movers are being put into operation depending for motive power on forces of nature hitherto only academically conceived. The old problems of whether we should use a pure *charkha* or a *charkha* that can be turned by lighting a hand-made kerosene lamp somewhere under it can now belong only to the “vineyardists”, poor frustrated ghosts who would sing an economic Song of Solomon to some imaginary mistress of Political Power. For all the rest of mankind the relevant mechanical problems are not these.

Every live and intelligent man realises today that societies hereafter can be kept advancing only on the basis of an optimum assembly of heavy machinery. Every intelligent man knows that even “small unit” machines cannot live divorced from huge supplies of power. Even for the Doctor’s machine, he would either require an oil industry or hydro-electric schemes. Surprising as is the Doctor’s capacity to overlook these facts, his refusal to

recognise the revolutionary change in man's attitude to the machine is pathetic. As long as the big machine was only an expression of private property, the workers—the majority of mankind—may have feared and hated it. And clever people like the Doctor, who wanted popularity amongst the people, did now and then earn fame by abusing the big machine. But the rise of Socialist States and the revolutionary social use to which these big machines have been put, the ease with which they have been dove-tailed into economies of self-sufficiency, the social and moral returns that working people have drawn out of them through communism, have brought about a new understanding at every level of society. Along with this, people in every part of the world are also coming to understand that big capitalist concentrations of machinery for the sake of profit can be disestablished only through the creation of economies of optimum capital-concentration, politically controlled by communism.

What the Doctor is incapable of grasping in regard to machines, either big or small, is that they have never been invented because political leaders like him want them. They are invented and perfected from stage to stage by men in contact with nature, men whose understanding of nature is ever increasing. If a "small unit" bicycle is invented the next step is a huge bicycle producing plant. If a bicycle-producing plant is created a tool-making plant has to be established. A tool-making plant is a weapon which brings into being many different kinds of machinery, bringing about in their turn changes in many industries. If machinery could have been prevented from growing beyond a certain degree of complication and concentration by political will, a hundred reactionaries before Dr. Lohia would have achieved that feat and changed human history. It did not happen because science is stronger than reaction.

The Doctor has convinced himself that our conditions will not permit the accumulation of a decisive quantity of heavy industry because our population is too densely packed; the effort of industrialisation will take an unduly long time; we do not have the power to achieve

the necessary investment; and finally it will mean tremendous unemployment and other forms of cruelty.

These are inevitable fears in Asian minds exposed to imperialist propaganda through generations and we should try our best to rescue Dr. Lohia from them. From the time of Malthus to our own times, one school of imperialist economics has consistently dinned into the ears of the Asian that what is possible by way of industrialism in the cold lands is not possible in the "rice lands." Dr. Lohia has caught the infection terribly. Some simple facts may give him a little sense of comfort. India is not as densely populated as Britain. According to the 1951 census the population density is about 270 to the square mile in India. This is less than Britain and quite a number of other parts of Europe. Nor is the rate of increase of our population such that it need frighten any one other than Nehru-planners, who start with the assumption that population control and the "rhythm" method are the first steps in planning. Others—even those who prepare the vital statistics for the United Nations—are of the opinion that "India has no longer an abnormally high birth-rate by the international standards of today." Even a bourgeois economist like Carl Saunders believes that India is not over-populated. He says that "there are too many people only in relation to the whole set of economic facts." Communism teaches one to understand that economic facts are not eternal. They can and should be changed according to population. The Doctor has worked out a formula about density of population and the possibility of industrialization from the fact that in the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R., population density is, even today, less than fifty to the square mile. His formula is that industrialization on the basis of big machinery is possible only where population density is less than say 150 to the square mile. How he arrives at this figure is his own secret. That Japan industrialised her economy on the basis of heavy industry when her population was considerably more dense is, however, a fact. But even if we convince the Doctor that our population density need not frighten him, he will still plead other reasons and

assert that we cannot, like other advanced people, base our economic progress on modern industrialisation.

If we industrialise agriculture a tremendous number of people will be thrown out of their present agricultural employment, he believes. These people cannot be absorbed in industries because we have none and cannot build them. We have not enough money for investment. Indian economy's incapacity to invest is a recurring thought in the great Doctor.

The Doctor has calculated that, while in the "two-thirds" of the world, the worker's productive apparatus is worth Rs. 150 per person, in the white world it is worth Rs. 5000 to Rs. 8000. Where will you find the money to buy tools worth Rs. 5000 for each Indian worker? The Doctor knows how hard it is to get money and naturally concludes that if we are reasonable we should not attempt this kind of industrialization. "Even if Communist India can somehow invest Rs. 500 crores in the first five year plan only one million persons will get Rs. 5000 worth of tools."

Let us clear these confusions. The American worker's tools "worth" Rs. 8000 per head are not "his" tools. They are the property of the American monopoly capitalists. Their "worth" and the "worth" of the small implements mainly used today by the Indian producer cannot be mechanically compared. The dollar and the rupee are related on the dollar's terms and proportionately to the dollar's hold over the world market and its military power. The American tool-producing industry is organised as private enterprise. Monopoly begins to make its profits from the time tools are made and continues to do so right through the whole chain of production. The "worth" of tools in such a system is an unknown quantity. The face value of constant capital in private-owned industry is a usual part of the capitalist fraud.

When a communist talks of a tool-making industry he will not and cannot think in terms of market prices. The "investment" required to set up a heavy industry in a private enterprise economy is dependent on the condition of the market, the bank rate, "private pull" etc. The

investment required for building up a heavy industry under communist control is a matter of the total economic surplus and the possible increment in the national income through planned primary effort. "When the communist planner sets about the task of industrialising the country, he will not, like Dr. Lohia, calculate the difference between Rs. 150 and Rs. 5000 and multiply it by the number of workers in the country and come to the conclusion that we cannot find the necessary "investment".

The history of communist planning has exploded all the nonsense that "democratic planners" used to trot out to delay revolutionary planning effort. It has been established in Russia once and for all that the only basis for planning is the capacity of government to draw from the people the maximum quantity of labour willingly given. This is the "true" investment. But we admit it is difficult for people like Dr. Lohia to realise this.

In Russia, Stalin assumed after the revolution that the people would enthusiastically work so that the State could save enough to embark on a programme of intensive industrialization. Trotsky said "the contradiction inherent in the position of a workers' government functioning in a backward country, where the large majority of the population are peasants, can only be liquidated on an international scale." He therefore advocated a series of revolutions in other countries. It was his interpretation of the theory of "immediacy". Dr. Lohia's sense of "immediacy" makes him march the other way. His "immediacy" moral is the small unit machine. The Russian planners did not calculate the difference between the price of a spade and that of a mechanical drill and arrive at the "investment" that would be necessary. They calculated the national income—that is, an estimate of the gainful work performed by society. They then determined what quantity out of this would be required for the actual process of feeding, clothing, etc. and how much of it could be used for constructing industries that would increase income. The Gosplanners said that between a quarter and a third of the national income could be invested for the rehabilitation of economy. They did not wonder what proportion of the agricultural popula-

tion would be thrown out of employment if agricultural workers used better implements. They did not work out the "worth" of American implements in terms of roubles.

Dr. Lohia's chief difficulty when he starts to think of social and economic changes is that he cannot free himself from his class obsessions. He is incapable of understanding how society can ever exist without capitalist property acting the part of prime mover. When he talks of accumulation of industrial capital, the picture that rises in his mind is that of "Kanpur and Calcutta"; when he tries to work out investment possibilities it is in terms of current money. This is natural in one who has, *a priori*, made up his mind that change is fundamentally bad and can at best lead only to an uglier aspect of the *status quo*. This fear of change expresses itself in a total incapacity to understand the tremendous part that revolutionary changes play in the economic potentialities of a people. It is reflected in Dr. Lohia's "reasonable" expectation that the Congress will finally act democratically, which means that it will never try to change social relationships fundamentally, that it will keep privilege secure and try to reduce population through birth control.

But communists usually do not proceed to planning without its first premise, namely a fundamental political change; a change in the relationship of the people to the State. The Communist Party here as elsewhere knows that it is only on the basis of the love and power of the people that any plan can work and that, according to the enthusiasm of a people, "investments" can be found. Communism never mechanically seeks to turn an Indian peasant into a worker, a cultivator into a tractor driver. Communism knows that in backward economies the "peasant" is a worker. There is no need to turn him into one. Communism believes that with an optimum of industrial capital available to him, the peasant who is working in brutish conditions will be able to work in human conditions. Communism never turns the "cultivator" into the tractor driver. It seeks to and succeeds in



making more tractor drivers and more "cultivators" working together and producing more.

"Communist modernisation" of agriculture will not "throw crores of people out of work". Communist modernisation of agriculture in China has begun with efforts at fuller agricultural employment. If once people like Dr. Lohia can get over the bourgeois-created contradiction between industry and agriculture, they may perhaps be able to understand that industry can be geared to agriculture according to the needs of agriculture; according to the consumption needs proper to a locality or a country; according to the quality of the land, its potentialities and its historic peculiarities. The fear of a horrible separateness between "big industry" and agriculture arises out of the habitual belief that industry can never be anything but capitalist-owned and that its traditional victim and enemy is the rural population. The chief task of communism in the twentieth century has been the removal of this contradiction. Communism has no set pattern of industry. Its picture of industry is an assemblage of tools and production of goods strictly according to the needs of the people. Communism believes that no population is over-dense. If privilege does not short-circuit production, it can, says Communism, increase in direct proportion to population, satisfying new consumption needs among the people and, through a variety of production, achieving new fields of occupation and employment. Neither agriculture nor industry has fixed an eternal maxima of production. Communism has proved in Russia that it can bring almost polar regions under cultivation, that temperature and humidity changes can be brought about to change the quality and quantity of agriculture, that wheat can be made to yield perennially, etc. The obsession that agriculture and industry have immutable saturation points after which the dread law of diminishing returns operates is a pure capitalist conception deliberately engendered by Dr. Lohia's economic teachers, the intellectual sharks of profit-hunting capitalism.

Communism in India will have to resort to "ruthless suppression" in the period of planning if it is geared to

an economy based on big industry, says the Doctor. The fundamental change that has come over Communist tactical thought as a result of experience in Russia is rarely realised by superficial bourgeois thinkers. The period of "War Communism" in Russia taught the leaders of the revolution that the rate of social change does not mainly depend on their own subjective intensity of faith in revolution; that social revolution, that is, change in effective relations between class and class in society, between individuals and society, and the individual's reactions to traditional institutions, all depend chiefly on the actual social situation in the given community, that is, on the sum of the economic forces at play at a given time. Communism learned that according to the social situation created in a given society by the unequal development of capitalism, the quality of the social change in the society will differ from others. The communist learnt that his task as a Marxist is not to separate himself from what is possible by insisting on what he wants. From 1917 onwards, this lesson was consistently taught by Lenin but its significance became absolutely clear by about 1920. The change that came over the response of the masses to the revolutionary order when it re-introduced the market under the N.E.P. convinced all the leading minds of the Communist Party of Russia that Communism's first step is a democratic revolution, not merely in regard to the classes associated in the capture of power but also in regard to the institutions and laws that follow a revolution.

When the policy of compulsory requisitioning of peasant surpluses was replaced by the policy of permitting commercial transactions as between agriculture and industry, the foundation for the new tactic was laid. It was the democratic preface to socialism. Ever since, whether in China or the New Democracies of Europe, communism has taken the greatest care not to force the pace of social change beyond what is realistically possible in any given situation. The wild stories of ruthless, impatient Communists cutting off the heads of holy people all round, is part of the London *Times* tradition, built in the good old days of the "Riga correspondent".

## 10. *Imperialism and Asia*

These are all well known facts about communism and the Communist Parties of the world. Why should Dr. Lohia who is reputed to have even read "Marx in German" raise these age-old and often-answered questions now? It cannot be that he is a victim of the neo-Malthusian theory that has been fabricated in America. In that case he would not be talking about rehabilitating Asian economy even with the small unit machine, or plaintively admitting that (satyagrahic) "class struggle hastens and matures the destruction of capitalism" without which destruction "two-thirds of the world cannot even make the first move".

The American Malthusian, whether of the aggressive variety of William Vogt or of the more modest kind like Frank Lorimer, has a compact concept about Asia. In essence it is that Asia is doomed and that the best that can happen to it is a series of social and economic disasters through which its people will deteriorate into a new sub-human species while white humanity proceeds to a new superhuman mutation. The economics of Colin Clark, which innocently suggests "light industries" for Asian countries, and the atomic philosophy of Baruch, complement the neo-Malthusian moral.

Dr. Lohia, however, does not wholly accept its correctness, not because his own economic concepts will run counter to those of the neo-Malthusians, but perhaps, because it will "fragment" his proud "world mind". Anyhow, let us grant that Dr. Lohia is not American in his Malthusian orientation. Yet we find him inventing his impossible "small unit" machine, talking of decentralisation, of ashrams, and all that reactionaries usually talk about, when they get frightened of progress.

The logical end to the argument that our density of population will not permit us to catch up with, and pass, the productive total achieved by private capitalism in America, that we can never achieve assemblies of productive goods of American magnitude and, therefore, that we must be content with small unit machines, would be to accept the Malthusian destiny of degeneration that the

Americans are prescribing for us in their economics if not in their diplomacy.

Dr. Lohia does not do this. He realises that Indian patriotism will spurn this kind of talk. He knows that every day the number of Indians is increasing who understand the significance of communism in China and Russia and realise that raising the standard of living, however backward the economy, is a matter of will and a willingness to re-arrange classes within society. Yet he tries in his pernicious "Doctrine" to implant the idea in the minds of Praja-Socialists that what Asian socialists should work for is a "decent standard of living" not a "rising standard of living".

It seems to be his purpose to convert the unfortunates who have surrendered their minds to him into missionaries of a message of economic retreat when the masses of India are loudly clamouring for a movement of advance. A "decent standard of living" implies a readiness to limit hope or production to some fixed total. It is a concept of economic decadence. It is a rejection of faith in the Indian people. Why is the great hero of '42 resorting to this measly corruption of his Party's understanding?

To answer this question we must determine the role that imperialism has set apart for political parties representing parasite groups in Asia in the final phase of the general crisis of capitalism. To understand the quality of mischief implied in the Lohia "Doctrine" we will have to trace that mischief to its real trans-Atlantic source, not just to the dilettante mind of an America-oriented Asian "cosmopolitan".

American cartel interests who have formed the real base of the American state since 1915 entered the second World War with whetted ambitions. During the first World War Karl Kautsky, the renegade Marxist, had sketched his theory of ultra-imperialism which stated that "the present imperialist policy will be supplanted by a new ultra-imperialist policy, which will introduce the common exploitation of the world by internationally united finance capital in place of the mutual rivalries of national finance capital." This theory seemed quite suitable to American monopolists by the end of the first

World War. Placed far away from the actual theatre of war, with considerable advantages as regards efficiency in production, the American monopolist was confident that he was strong enough to dominate any international system based on the hunt for profit. The Great Economic Depression in America, during which, in the space of three years, the entire capitalist production fell by 46%, made the monopoly controllers of production further realise that the only way to reduce the shock when it came next was to extend the cartel structure internationally and thus include in the scope of the American market the entire colonial areas of all the imperialist countries. American "liberals" like Alvin Hansen found it an interesting occupation those days to explain to the European countries that this was no selfish motive. A violently fluctuating America, it was repeatedly insisted, was a terrible menace to the rest of the capitalist world. While the more "progressive" American capitalists, before and during the war, carried on this propaganda on behalf of a united capitalist stand, the "realists", the real monopolies, continued to concentrate their assets so that, whatever the liberals said, they themselves could effectively control the imperialist pool as and when it came into being. By 1942 the monopoly process within America had reached such a point that a Senate Report admitted "startling development of monopolistic controls and practices". "The upper 50 per cent of non-financial corporations earned 84.5 per cent of the total income of all non-financial corporations". The Report said: "The relatively few giant corporations of the country which have come to dominate our entire economy, are themselves, largely owned by only a few thousand stockholders and are controlled by a mere handful of huge financial interests." These monsters of finance did realise that their situation was indeed precarious. The capitalisms of Europe were keenly conscious of their own tragic condition and the inordinate power concentrated in American hands. Monopoly was also aware that its internal needs were such that without frenzied war production a colossal crisis would overtake it. The monopolists therefore began to talk about love and intense idealism, and

secondly of "containing communism". Along with this they also began talking of a new capitalist philosophy of fair shares as between capitalist countries. But essentially there was no change in the motives of capitalism. In reality, to the hard-headed monopolists the Marshall Plan and all other similar plans had only one great purpose—the large-scale export of United States capital.

In the beginning of the post-war era there were quite a number of European capitalists who imagined that the common pool of capitalism advocated by America could be used for common imperialist purposes. When, however, American economic policy began to reveal itself suspicions grew. Pressure began to be put on the dear Marshall-partners to reduce wages and expenditure on social services. Allegedly this was for "reducing inflation". Really it was to reduce the price of European labour so that production in Europe could earn greater profit for American monopolists. European currencies were next devalued because the American dollar had to be kept at the highest point of buying power. Then steps began to be taken to control and restrict European investment for production. Then trade restrictions as between Eastern and Western Europe were insisted upon, so that West Europeans could trade only with America, on America's terms. As this scheme of monopoly—an ultra-imperialism quite different from what Kautsky had foreseen—became clear to European capitalists and their States, pitiful complaints and angry protests began to be heard. The contradictions that always haunt capitalism once again made themselves manifest. The Marshall Plan began to defeat its own purpose.

American monopolist strategy, when it began the adventure, was aimed at assuming entire control of the European production system and achieving absolute economic control of the colonial areas—not only those directly ruled by the senile imperialisms of Europe but also all such Asian areas as still tolerated any degree of economic dependence on the British or other imperialists, areas like India where, on the basis of a political manoeuvre, economic dependence on imperialism had been secured. But British and other European capitalists very soon

became aware of this objective on the part of their benevolent master and began to express their resentment not merely through the mouths of politicians but even in certain economic measures. France protested against American interference aimed at moderating her downright imperialist wars in Indo-China and North Africa. Britain organised a "dollar pool" as a defensive weapon against the ever-increasing pressure of the dollar on her economy. This naturally brought immediate knocks on her head. During an interesting U. S. Senate debate on the loan to Britain Senator Johnson cried out, "If the United States desired to do so, and were willing to fight fire with fire, it could knock the sterling bloc and its dollar pool into a cocked hat before sundown." But knocking out the sterling bloc and going all out against the European imperialists would not serve the ends of monopoly. It might release forces in the colonial world not at all to monopoly's real interests.

As the inter-capitalist rivalry began to expose America's real monopolist intentions and made the Marshall Plan essentially futile, the policy of direct approach to the colonial people began. Asian countries on which the hold of imperialism had lessened to the degree that direct political rule had disappeared were naturally the first to experience this new American interest in their problems. But the approach to Asia had to be very different from that to Europe. In Europe, American monopoly's effort was to bring already established concentrated units of production of relatively high efficiency under American control and to achieve greater profit through the difference in the price of American and European labour. As regards Asia, the purpose of monopoly is to establish direct contact with markets and raw material areas. In Europe, Mr. Hoffman could talk endlessly of the need for modernising, quickening and vitalising industry, because America was interested in increasing European production so as to increase the profits gained by controlling American finance. In Asia this would not do. Any appreciable increase in the real industrial production of a country like India would be a danger. What monopoly wanted was a pure market area;

not something that would become a rival, unless full political control could be established. This was not possible in post-war Asia where nationalism was an all-class passion.

In Europe the development of capitalism and the corruption of large elements of the middle classes by monopoly had been so successful that even a demand for political control of States so as to "save them from communism" would not shock sections of public opinion greatly. The writer remembers the shock caused to him by Mme. Tabouis, the well-known French journalist, when in the course of a conversation in 1950 she very cheerfully said that as far as the "intelligent people" of France were concerned they regarded America quite as much their country as France itself. In Asia, very few classes in those countries that had achieved political freedom of any kind would tolerate American "protection from communism" if it meant political control. The offer to save them could only fall on very deaf ears. Therefore, "containment of communism" could not be an apt argument. Thus there was a dilemma. Straightforward industrialisation through export of capital should not and could not be mentioned, firstly because it would be dangerous in itself and secondly because political control, the only way of making it less dangerous, would only drive the Asian people further away from monopoly. It was to meet this predicament that the philosophy of Point Four began to be evolved and offered to Asian countries.

Point Four was proclaimed by the saintly President Truman in 1949 as a purely missionary venture to increase the happiness of the under-developed world. In his pure mind there was not a single thought about profits for America in the present or future. But very soon Americans themselves began to give the show away. The International Chamber of Commerce which drew up, on behalf of American capitalism, the model agreement that has to be signed by governments accepting foreign aid, said, not very long after the Presidential pronouncement, that "Foreign investments must not be limited to the big project type investments. This is where excessive planning of investments may interfere with the volume of



capital invested." After this warning that Point Four had other than missionary hopes and purposes, many revelations have been made. Secretary Acheson, the fighter against Koreans from strong situations said, "I think there is a pretty widely held idea that we are going to build large mills, mines and factories for these under-developed peoples. That is not true." Mr. Abbink, a great American industrialist and friend of Mr. Acheson, made what Point Four really meant much clearer. He said "The United States must be prepared to 'guide' the inevitable, large-scale industrialization of under-developed countries, if it is to cushion the shock of intensive economic development abroad on the American economy. The success of the Point Four Programme will play an important role in the crisis in world trade that approaches as industrialisation grows.... This industrialization drive, if not controlled by some means as the Point Four Programme, would mean a substantial reduction in the size of American export markets." Finally the International Chamber of Commerce capped everything by the unabashed announcement that "The economic grounds for assisting under-developed countries are principally two: one is to assist them in opening up additional sources of raw materials partly for their own use but mainly for export to the United States and other highly industrialised countries.... The second economic ground for assistance to under-developed countries is the objective of an expanding world economy in which a dynamic economy such as that of the United States can continue to thrive."

Thus the approach to Asia is clear. What is necessary is to step in as early as possible into all possible under-developed areas with promises of insignificant help. This help should be so given that industrialization, which is regarded as "inevitable", can be "guided". (Note the difference from Dr. Lohia. While our great Indian economic-philosopher is quite dogmatic about the impracticability of Indian and Asian industrialization, the American monopolist who knows what industrialism is, and under what conditions it is possible for it to develop, concedes that it is inevitable.) "Guiding" is clearly ex-

plained by Mr. Abbink as "controlling"—that is, preventing Asian industrialism from becoming a rival for markets or raw material. Controlling in such circumstances merely becomes delaying. The American approach to the Asian economic problem as revealed in the Point Four Programme is therefore one of calculated delay, for as long as possible, of the process of Asian industrialisation. As this becomes increasingly clear, occasional doubts about American motives arise in the mind of Indian capitalism, even as they did in Europe.

American knowledge of Indian conditions was not realistic till very recently. There was a tendency to generalise all Asia and to imagine that what was true of China and what was possible with Chiang Kai-shek was immediately possible, in the same manner, in India also. Therefore, in the first instance, American monopoly imagined that through certain compradore deals with one or two important Indian business houses the capitalism of India could be silenced and prevented from criticising American meddling. Experience however taught them that this was not so. However weak Indian capitalism may be, the two or three pro-imperialist houses do not entirely make it up. Outside and beyond them there are considerable sections of the bourgeoisie who hope for industrialization of the country and quicker profits. Experience has taught the Americans that the source of Nehru's capacity for even the kind of "neutrality" he affects in foreign policy was the existence of this nationalist bourgeoisie. Had the Houses of Birla and Tata been wholly representative of Indian capitalism the compulsions on Nehru would have been different and Mr. Masani may have led an army to Korea. But to an appreciable section of the Indian capitalist bourgeoisie, American tactics in Asia are as painful as American tactics in Western Europe became to the West European capitalists. In spite of all claims of "guiding", in spite of the crocodile tears about the poverty of the Asian masses, in spite of constant scare-mongering campaigns about communism, increasing sections of the nationalist bourgeoisie are beginning to suspect imperialist tactics and, in the same measure, to regard the chances of trade and economic

relations with the socialist countries objectively. Even *The Times of India*, which represents interests largely monopolistic, was forced to write the other day, while discussing the initiation of the second phase of the Point Four Programme, as follows: "The only conclusion to be drawn is that the U.S. private investor wishes to capitalise on India's invidious economic position by driving a particularly hard bargain with this country. . . . Countries aspiring to world leadership cannot confine economics to their backyard and simultaneously expect to extend politics to the global plane." Indian capitalism, like West European capitalism, in the main, and in spite of the presence in its midst of fully "compradored" elements, certainly will not like explanations that delay industrialism in India. Some of them may not mind a "global extension" of American political leadership but even they will, and now and then do, demand the *quid pro quo* of industrialization.

In this difficult situation it becomes necessary for the American monopolist to look for newer allies. By and large, American monopoly is satisfied with the Nehru Congress, both in regard to its indifference to India's economic need for industrialization and its foreign policy. But, proportionately to the Indian nationalist bourgeoisie's suspicion of American monopolist intentions and its liability to be attracted to trade with the socialist world, the Nehru Congress also becomes, in the eyes of the American monopolist, an uncertain friend. The nationalism of the Congress masses gives a weight to the Nehru Congress which adds quantitatively to its irritating uncertainty in American eyes. Therefore, for some time now, American monopoly has been assiduously searching for other props in India, props which can be used not only for buttressing economic theories most favourable to American expansionism in India but which are also useful in undermining the influence of the uncertain nationalist bourgeoisie, whenever it is anti-imperialist. It is in regard to these two tasks that an Indian political party, representing what we can only call "parasite group" interests, becomes extremely useful to American monopoly capitalism.

The role cast for such a party by the U.S. monopolists does not include the taking over of government because Americans, with their realistic awareness of capitalist political mechanics, know only too well that through bourgeois parliaments and elections only the highest form of property can achieve administrative power. Though they reject Marxist definitions of the State, every "democratic" political and constitutional pundit has acknowledged the fact that only the rich and the powerful control governments in capitalist democracies. The unashamed mutual attacks about financial dishonesty and sharp-practice that follow every election in America certainly convince every "democratic" American that his political leaders represent solid money interests. Knowing this, American monopolists naturally realise that neither parties like the new Praja-Socialist Party nor even those like the original Socialist Party or the K.M.P.P. have any chance of becoming governments in India. As opposition groups, however, they can be made to serve the interests of monopoly. It is unlikely that any appreciable section of the national bourgeoisie will prefer the fantasies of the Praja-Socialists to the conservatism of the Congress. But the shameless opportunism of such groups makes them ideal weapons for the imperialist saboteur.

Two great facts are becoming increasingly apparent to people all over the colonial world. One is that capitalism in the last phase of its general crisis is riddled with internal jealousies and can offer to under-developed economies only the position and status of victims and economic slaves. The other fact is the irresistible progress of socialism towards the establishment of independent economies in every region which comes under its control. These facts emphatically influence various classes in countries like India. The working peoples, whether industrial or rural, whether proletarian or peasant, derive a new sense of self-confidence and begin to act with a new sense of purpose. The property-owning classes realise the comparative insignificance of their property as against monopoly. In this situation parties who have

no social purpose but that of parasites come in handy to the monopolist.

Such parties are useful in the first instance to confuse the growing working class faith in international solidarity. They can pump imperialist propaganda against the socialist states. They are useful also as weapons to prevent proletarian unity within the country as well as the unity of the peasant and the worker. Thirdly, they serve as instruments to keep the national bourgeoisie in step whenever it shows any signs of disobedience to imperialism or a sense of independence. Fourthly, they are extremely useful to the imperialists for spreading the Malthusian message of defeat amongst Asians by talking about the impracticability of industrialisation and thus fouling public opinion.

In India, because the leaders of such parties invariably have reputations for nationalist fervour established in the days of agitation against the British administration, they become dangerous to the people and doubly useful to the imperialist.

The Praja-Socialist Party is fulfilling every one of these functions shamelessly. Its chief component, the Socialist Party, is the most venomous propagandist against the Soviets and China in Asia. Many of its members openly identify themselves with thinly-veiled institutions of monopoly propaganda in this country. Its policy, in regard to trade unionism is to disrupt trade union unity at every step. Its message to the peasants is to join in "constructive work" with the Congress and and foreign monopolist.

As for the stuff about "decentralization", "immediacy", etc. spouted by Dr. Lohia, it, by itself, would not have deserved serious attention. But when such trash provides a vehicle for the transmission of imperialist purpose it becomes necessary to take note of it and fight it wherever it raises its head. Dr. Lohia wants "decentralisation" both for philosophic reasons and because he has convinced himself that Indian economy cannot be built on the foundation of heavy industry. The American monopolist has no philosophic aversion to heavy industry. He, however, wants to prevent or de-

lay as long as possible the realistic industrialisation of this country. Dr. Lohia peddling his "small unit machine" thus becomes an extremely useful ally for monopoly. He wants "immediacy", meaning that revolutionary long-term economic planning cannot be effective in this country. The monopolist knows that once India takes the road of a democratic revolution and the inevitable planning that will follow it, his fate will become even more precarious than it is today. In Dr. Lohia therefore the monopolist sees a wonderful weapon to thwart the Indian revolutionary mind. What has to be realised by every progressive political worker in India, be he in the Praja-Socialist party or outside it, is that in the situation in which we are it is extremely dangerous to permit such confused and reactionary logic as Dr. Lohia's to gain any degree of currency.

In this connection it is very significant that the advertisement of his theory is not confined to this country. During his 'Haj' to America in 1951, Dr. Lohia did not hesitate to talk his defeatist economics and his reactionary politics to American audiences to convince them how sincere he was in both, and perhaps to show how useful a philosophy Praja-Socialism's would be to them.

An American admirer has collected his great speeches and published them with a running commentary in a pamphlet entitled *Lohia and America Meet*. The Doctor said on one occasion: "I do not believe that the large scale machine, the large scale factory which produces goods in great numbers is capable of abolishing the poverty of the larger part of mankind." The Mellons and the Duponts, who do not want such machinery or such factories in India, but only an Indian market into which the products of American "large scale" machinery and American "large scale" factories can be dumped, must have danced with joy.

On another occasion he said that what India wanted was not "an ever-increasing standard of living but a decent standard of living."

The Malthusians of America must have been glad when they heard that and waxed enthusiastic about their own philosophy of a world of supermen and sub-men—

those who want increasing standards of comforts and others who will be content with what they are given.

At a third meeting he said: "We will go ahead on a minimum basis for heavy industry but mainly our people need small unit machines that they can use in the villages."

That was exactly what the International Chamber of Commerce as well as the N.A.M. were eagerly waiting to be told by a great "leader" from India, especially a "Socialist" leader.

But this was not the only kind of assurance that our Doctor gave his American friends. Sometimes he was very direct, that is, very abjectly blatant. Naturally, that was when he spoke to American "Bankers, Business Executives" etc. "I must distinguish between Asian capitalism and yours, because yours is producing wealth," he said. The Doctor is a great cosmopolitan and he was not worried about the question as to who appropriated the "wealth" produced by the American capitalist or whose work "produced" it.

Again the Duponts and the Mellons must have wholly agreed with the Doctor because they also believe that it is best to draw a distinction between the American and the Asian capitalist and make the latter a mere distributor while the former can go on "producing" wealth exclusively.

At another meeting, says the author of the book, Dr. Lohia "had explained to the assembled bankers and business executives that he could understand their reluctance to invest in Indian enterprise with conditions as uncertain as at present, but he was confident that *under a strong socialist India they would not only see communism stopped in its tracks, but see signs of rapid growth which would attract many good businessmen. They might not find many private corporations, but he thought that investment in socialist enterprise might well bring them a decent return on their money.*"

This is a candid admission of subservience by Praja-Socialism. Its chief task is halting communism in its tracks for the benefit of America. And as soon as communism is stopped, the American can invest money here

on the basis of a decentralised economy and take home a "decent return". What does this mean but an offer to make this country a firm market for American goods? It not merely means that. The Doctor also assures his American friends that he will see that Indian capitalism does not compete with American interests because there will be no "private corporations". On the other hand, the glorious socialist state itself will be the chief compradore. It is a straight effort to outbid the Congress for the position of chief agent of imperialism in India.

The economic ideas implicit in these statements are supplemented by announcements on Dr. Lohia's political purposes in the international field. "In regard to the soft area the Socialist Party would like to achieve a series of mutual assistance pacts. This is the best way to secure this area. If we had been the government of India and had assembled power we would have done something about Tibet. I called what China did to Tibet, baby murder."

This again is exactly what the State Department wants. Mutual assistance pacts between Asian countries are the prescriptions most popular with the imperialists for cure of the "Asian problem". A mutual assistance pact concluded by a number of governments who between them cannot produce a single aeroplane is a wonderful opportunity for America to establish its hold on the separate entities of the pact. Conglomerations of weak states taught to mouth sentiments about "democracy", etc., have inevitably led to the imposition of American control over them. Dr. Lohia's first impulse, as soon as he thought of a mutual assistance pact for soft Asia, was to go to war with China over Tibet's "baby murder". That makes it abundantly clear to what end these "pacts" will be used. But how will Dr. Lohia lead the pact? Either he must fight with "small unit" lathis, or give his friends an atom-base. America will gladly oblige for she wants as many Syngman Rhees and as many Koreas as possible.

Dr. Lohia's "socialism" indeed achieved complete expression in America and his admirer who compiled his epoch-making speeches says, "One of his favourite lines



in America was to tell a good conservative that he had all the earmarks of a socialist or to tell a demurring liberal 'whether you call yourself a socialist or not, I think you are one.' It does not matter to him what an American calls himself. As long as he is an American he is a friend!

It is in the context of this packet assurance given to American monopoly that Praja-Socialism's purpose has to be understood.

The danger of the "theory of decentralisation" lies in the fact that, in the present conditions of production, a vast area like India, without its own regionally apposite heavy industries, will continue to be a slave area economically.

The dishonesty in the "Theory of Immediacy" lies in the fact that it is an attempt to direct impatient *petit bourgeois* minds into purely pragmatic attitudes in regard to economics and politics, and to corrupt them into stooges of opportunist politicians who reject all planned revolutionary effort. The appreciation of the mischief in such formulations enables us to see their real source, not in Dr. Lohia's own trivial mind, but in the minds of the American monopolists, the hippopotami of capitalism, who would "decentralise" every region and system of production save their own, so that it can be exploited, dehumanised and destroyed.

The immediate ridiculousness of the "merger", the silly words in the mouths of its leaders, even the total lack of public interest in their doings, should not blind the true revolutionary to the harm implied in it. He should realise that though many have left the Socialist Party in recent times, disillusioned with the continuous opportunism of its leaders, there are many more to be saved for progress and democracy. The Indian revolutionary who rightly scorns the "merger" should realise that at no time in human history did class struggle assume such an intensely concrete expression as today. In proportion to the gigantic evolution of socialist power since the October Revolution and the consequent realisation by imperialism that its days are numbered — whatever cloak it may use to cover its bloody face—the Marxist idea and im-

perialist tradition have become active opponents within the minds of millions of men and women all over the world. In our country, young men and women are increasingly realising that the form of State and the political philosophy created by capitalism are useless for the tasks of economic and social liberation of our millions. Without such a liberation these millions cannot think and act like human beings. As young people come to realise this, they invariably come to understand the tremendous significance of Marxist teaching and of collective work. They search for unity and for purpose.

As this social phenomenon becomes clear to the enemies of youth, the spell-binders and "doctrine" vendors, the little leaders who have no profession but politics and whose capital is the ignorance of their followers, they sense danger to themselves and resort to tactics that are only meant to confuse growing minds and delay their intellectual liberation. The formation of the Praja-Socialist Party is one such dirty tactic. It is a desperate effort by a gang of cynical politicians to draw away the attention of the rank and file of their parties from their own poverty of ideas and lack of mass support.

Instances are not wanting when these leaders have been able to use young people belonging to their parties in pointless demonstrations against the representatives of progressive nations in India, in propagating reactionary economic theories and in politically aggrandising themselves through clan feuds with similar leaders of the Congress.

Both the KMPP and the Socialist Parties have been exposed by the elections as wholly unnecessary political parties in our situation. The leaders knew that they could not exist as leaders for long because on every side they found their followers walking away. It was this sense of danger which brought them together and prompted them to trot out an "ideology" in which none amongst them save its author could have believed. Having come together they are now avidly trying to keep the rank and file of the parties bemused with the "doctrine" and tall talk about "work", "action", etc.

Where and how can the Praja Socialist Party "work" till preparations for the next elections begin? Its leaders, afraid of the working class and its philosophy, decided as soon as they merged that trade unionism in India should be beyond politics. What does this mean? It can only mean that on the working-class front the effort of the Praja Socialist Party will be to sabotage the growing political consciousness of Indian workers. The Congress and its leaders are doing this today and have been for quite a while now.

The leaders of the Praja Socialist Party talk of "struggles", but "peaceful" struggles. The record of the "struggles" hitherto undertaken by either of the partners gives no promise of future adventures drawing greater mass support. The KMPP has not "struggled" at all. The Socialists in the last few years have resorted to a few demonstrations and strikes but in each case the struggle ended without any one knowing how or why. Shri Jayaprakash Narayan at least has drawn the moral from these lessons, that the best one can do is to withdraw into a village. Whether Praja Socialists mean to "struggle" hereafter or not, the masses in this country are not likely to see in them a political party qualitatively different from the Congress.

The realization of this is apparent in two recent statements made by Shri Asoka Mehta. In Ernakulam a few days after the "merger" he said: "We are anxious to develop certain points of contact with the Congress and the Congress Governments. This country cannot be built on the philosophy of non-cooperation." In *Janata*, he wrote: "A political party does not necessarily need an ideology... The Socialists have dared to move towards a new integration. It is an act that invites encouragement, not derision."

These are sly appeals to the Congress leadership. They mean that the Praja Socialist Party is prepared to work with the Congress; that now that they have discarded all talk of revolution, all ideology etc., they deserve encouragement by the Congress. Shri Asoka Mehta is a realist. He knows that whatever the Praja Socialists may say, they cannot achieve a separate identity from the

Congress in public opinion. He also knows that the struggle for leadership within the newly-assembled Party will be so keen that it may not be able to hold together till the next elections. Taking into consideration all these facts it seems to be best, in the opinion of the General Secretary of the Party, to start early and insist that there is no real reason why the Praja Socialists and the Congress should quarrel. Shri Asoka Mehta knows that the Lohia "Doctrine" or any doctrine will not prevent another merger — next time with the Congress — when it becomes necessary. In fact, he knows there are in the Congress also a number of leaders who will welcome any economic theory that suits American monopoly interests.

But what about the young men in the Praja Socialist Party?

As they have been carried into this merger they may again be carried into the next, in spite of their detestation of imperialism and their growing consciousness of the significance of class struggle in our epoch. To so carry them is the purpose of the leadership which always talks the language of defeatism and opportunism. Unless they realise the reactionary and cowardly role that imperialism and their own leadership has assigned to them they will be lost to the cause of progress, lost to themselves.

The real danger in Praja-Socialism is this: these young people, caught in the coils of the sophistry of Asoka Mehta, the economic and social reactionarism of Lohia and the frustrated defeatism of Acharya Kripalani, will, without their own knowledge, be made enemies of the people when they could have been their friends, isolated from the people when they could have marched with them and led them.

To make the rank and file of the Praja Socialist Party understand the objective insignificance of the Party, its potentialities as a vehicle of imperialist conspiracy, and their own revolutionary function as Indians of a newer generation, is an important duty of every scientific socialist in India.

This task is not a very difficult one. The contempt heaped by the Press and public on Praja-Socialism has

already considerably unnerved the leaders. Everywhere groups of former socialists and some amongst the KMPP men have voiced their intense distaste for the "merger". Stalwarts like Shri Adityan and Shri Shibbanlal Saxena who refuse to be content with parasite politics have put heart in them by clearly pointing out the opportunist character of the "merger". The insistence on working in United Fronts for democratic action by members of the Socialist Party in several parts of South India have made the business deal struck in Bombay sterile. The ominous silence maintained by the author of the famous "Doctrine", during and after the "merger" is interpreted by many as a first sign of internal collapse. The well-known antipathy to the whole idea of the "merger" developed by the Kautskyite scholar Acharya Narendra Deva who, though opposed to the Communist Party of India, still insists on calling himself a Marxist, has considerably helped in disillusioning quite a number of socialists in Uttar Pradesh. In these conditions, it should not be difficult for vital men in the Praja Socialist Party to realise that the first task they have to perform if they mean to help and be with the masses of this country is to release themselves from the clutches of the Lohia Doctrine and the Asoka Mehta party machine.

The consolation that the rank and file get from the leadership of the Party is, in the words of Shri Kripalani, that "The nation is not only suffering physically but also psychologically. It has lost faith in itself and its leadership. It has become cynical in its attitude towards all talk of effort at reform."

This is deliberate defeatism, designed to debase the mind of Indian youth and to exploit that debasement for purely opportunist ends. The nation is not suffering psychologically. A people may suffer physically as the result of the reactionary ambitions of leaders and the conspiracy of those who want to exploit them. But the people invariably make use of their suffering to throw away such leaders and to assert themselves. The "psychology of the people" can never be corrupted. The people have not and cannot become cynical about the need and possibility of healthy economic and social change.

As they grow wiser about a certain type of leader, they clearly see through the fraud that is traditionally called "reform". This only makes the people more determined to achieve what they want. This is happening in India. The immense response to the message of United Fronts for democratic action, in villages and towns, in the far south as well as in the Punjab and PEPSU, the tremendous urban crowds of Bombay and Bengal which come out whenever the call is given in the name of the democratic movement, prove beyond doubt that there is nothing wrong with the Indian people.

The young people in the Praja Socialist Party are daily seeing this thrillingly steady growth of our people's interest in true democracy and it cannot but cure them of whatever obscurantist faith they may still be having in the "fused" leadership of the Praja Socialist Party.

The growth of the democratic strength of the Indian people and their advance under the banner of a free and united working class, to take their place shoulder to shoulder with other free people against cruel and obscene privilege, against the conspiracies of the profit-mongers and the exploiters, against sloth and corruption, political chicanery and the culture of cowardice, is inevitable. That tremendous march will stamp out opportunist leaders and expose their tricky and insincere philosophies. Let the young men of the Praja Socialist Party ponder over the past of their leaders. Let them observe the reality of the Indian situation and bravely decide to strengthen the democratic unity of the people. It is only thus that they will be able to prevent their being used as pawns of monopoly.

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